

BiWomen

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

February/March 1995

Vol. 13 No. 1

Inside

coordinating committee meetings • select the next type
articles for the newsletter • host a women's Saturday
brunch • answer telephone • write letters • staff the
newsletter • promote bi activism • sell t-shirts • lay out the
newsletter • organize Pride brunch • write letters • meet
women • draw bi cartoons • publicize events • march in
the Pride parade • print mailing labels • support one
another • sell buttons • the pride rally • coordinate

Who are the women of BBWN?

What do we do in BBWN, and how do we do it?

How long have we been involved?

This issue contains interviews with many of the women
who keep the BBWN a vibrant, important Network for
Bisexual women everywhere.

It also includes some How-To's (marked by dotted
lines like this) about various activities and tasks that
keep BBWN running.

Interviews are presented alphabetically by first name.

This is by no means an inclusive list of BBWN activists.
In fact, if you are not included here, we encourage you
to send us your answers to these questions, and we'll
print them in the next issue of BiWomen.

Ann Goglia

Interviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

What do you do in or for BBWN?

The main thing I do is facilitate the introductory
meetings every other month at the Cambridge
Women's Center. If I can't make it, I'm responsible
to get coverage to make sure someone is there.

I also go to some of BBWN's social things.

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

I moved to Boston in 1987, got involved in
1988. I just started to go to things, like the volun-
teer nights, the brunches...before I knew it I was
facilitating meetings, working on the newsletter.
One thing just led to another.

I think the first thing I went to was a coming out
group at the Women's Center. Then I went to a
brunch...it was really funny. I had seen a brunch
advertised in the newsletter, so I went to the res-
taurant and there was a group of women. I asked,
"Is this the brunch?" and they said yes. I thought
they looked like lesbians, but I didn't know how
you'd tell the difference between bisexual women
and lesbians, so I stayed and chatted with them.
Then another woman came in and asked if this
was the BBWN brunch and they said, "No," and
we both said, "Then which brunch is this?" It
turned out it was a Daughters of Bilitis activity and
the BBWN brunch had been canceled, but I didn't
know because I was new. But we had a great
time, a great conversation with these women
about bisexuality.

What have you gained from being in BBWN?

I've gotten a better sense of myself as bi, and a
sense of community. I find that very hopeful and
exciting. I've made some great friends. I've
learned a lot about organizing.

It's introduced me to a broader vision of bi-
sexuality and queerness in general—I've learned
a lot from people. From running the intro meet-
ings, especially. I'm honored to be a part of that.
It feels very special to help people think about
their orientation. And I feel honored, also, when
people tell me their stories, when people feel free

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Bi Choice

by Lynn Rosenbaum

Many gay and lesbian people as well as gay
rights activists would like to prove that homosexu-
ality is biological — that it's something you're born
into, something that cannot be changed. They want
to invalidate those attempts by a homophobic
society to "straighten" out gays with therapy, medi-
cation, or some good sex with the "right" gender.
The focus on an inherent biological orientation may
be a necessary strategy to defend against efforts to
prove that gays are just a little misguided and can
be "cured" with a little help. But where does all this
biology leave us with regard to choice?

Ed Marcus, an author addressing gay issues,
writes,

Just as heterosexual people don't choose their
feelings of sexual attraction, gay and lesbian people
don't choose theirs. The only real choice for gays,
lesbians and bisexuals is between suppressing these

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Printed on
recycled paper

Volunteers of the Month



Debbie Block-Schwenk
Linda Blair
Sharon
Stephanie Berger
Amy
Robyn Ochs
Carla Imperial
Cindy Vell
Claire M.
Laura Sachs
Katherine
Kathleen Hepburn
Kathrine Douthit

Other Bi Groups

In keeping with the theme of this issue - who are we and what do we do—*BiWomen* presents a brief description of some other Boston area Bi groups.

Biversity Boston

The mixed-gender bisexual network of greater Boston hold two brunches, an open rap group and other social events each month. The group is open to all bisexual and bi-friendly people interested in bisexual issues. Call (617) 338-9595 for more info or for a calendar of events. E-mail: biversity-request@gnu.ai.mit.edu

The Bisexual Resource Center

The Bisexual Resource Center is dedicated to expanding bisexual visibility and education internationally. The group publishes a resource guide and international directory of bisexual groups annually; sponsors conferences on bisexuality; and provides technical assistance, educational materials, referrals and other support to bisexual groups and individuals throughout the world. Its Boston office also is home to an extensive Bi-sexual Archives. For info call: (617) 338-9595 or write BRC, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, Mass. 02140, USA.

Gay and Bi Married Men's Support Group

Call (617) 576-9747 and leave a number and someone will get back to you. This is an informal support group for men who want to stay successfully married and learn about their identity.

The Bi Resource Office is Seeking Volunteers

If you would like to volunteer a few hours per month to answer requests for information, mail out literature and do office tasks, please call the Bi Resource Office at (617)338-9595 and leave a message for Lisa, Laura or Wayne. We are also seeking a Volunteer Coordinator.

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this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the April/May issue:

Non-Monogamy

The ups, the downs, what it means to
you...now's your chance to write.

Probable future themes:

Diversity Humor

DEADLINE for the April/May issue:

Friday, March 10, 1995

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

BBWN Financial Statement January 1 through December 31, 1994

Balance forward: 1/1/94 \$ 3901.27

Expenses:

Printing	1772.26
Postage	1034.61
Advertisement	171.44
Merchandise purchased	436.50
Bulk mail permit	114.00
Contribution toward rental of office	650.00
Bad check charges (bad check to BBWN)	60.00
Correct error	20.00
TOTAL:	4258.81

Income

Dues	3302.00
Advertising	140.00
Merchandise	1158.00
Events	24.74
Bank interest	55.24
TOTAL INCOME:	4676.98
BALANCE AS OF 12/31/94	4322.44

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this issue of *BiWomen*:

Kathleen Hepburn
Linda Blair
Debbie Block-Schwenk
Kathrine Douthit
Susan Santucci
Robyn Ochs
Stephanie Berger

BOOK REVIEW

Women Who Love Sex: Enhancing Your Sexual Pleasure and Enriching Your Life

by Gina Ogden, Ph.D. 1994, Pocket Books

Reviewed by Deborah Block-Schwenk

Buy this book! Ignore (if it bothers you) the lace-bordered feminine navel floating on the cover. Yes, ignore the cover and buy the book. It will broaden your perspective, and it might change your life.

In the introduction, Dr. Ogden describes her own background as a feminist researcher who has to deal with both the male-modeled theories of traditional sex therapy and the overly cynical approach towards sex within some feminist theories. With her original research for her doctoral dissertation speaking to women who identified themselves as "easily orgasmic", with her subsequent work, and finally with this book, Gina Ogden attempts to fill in the gaps, to provide women with a positive view of sexual pleasure that doesn't ignore the political and social forces that can make sexual pleasure difficult to achieve.

I approached the book with some intimidation: I'm not easily orgasmic, I don't achieve orgasm by fantasizing about the aspects of the Goddess or from my husband stroking my thighs. Rather than being one of those self-help books that begins by convincing you very strongly that you need help, though, this book presented issues on sexuality that I could relate to, problems that all women encounter. Even women who love sex, who are easily orgasmic, deal with the constant pressures of body image, of falling into the role of passive caretaker, of miscommunication with their partners. Some of them had survived rape or abuse; all of them had found ways to transcend the negative messages which women are bombarded with in our society.

The central chapters each focus around a different figure or group, a woman (or group of women) who has overcome problems that illustrate an essential element of sexual pleasure for women. For example, Alice (with help from her husband, Frank) has to overcome the disconnectedness that had made sex a rigid, controlled activity, rather than the spontaneous expression of their relationship that it becomes once their problems are resolved.

Two of these chapters also provide information that expands the sexual possibilities for women. In the first of these chapters, Gina Ogden brings together a group of women to discuss orgasms without genital contact. In the following chapter, female "spontaneous orgasm" (orgasm without touch, or as one woman puts it, "thinking off") is documented in the laboratory. Unusual as these women may be, their sexual experiences not only highlight the varieties of "safe sex" that are possible, but bring a new perspective to bear against the old stereotype that "all she needs is a man (i.e., a penis)."

Other chapters deal with issues of intimacy, nurturing, and the possibility of ecstasy, all of which are connected both with a sense of self and with spiritual transcendence. Several of the women who speak in this book emphasize that there is no way to separate sexuality and spirituality; Dr. Ogden constantly uses the descriptions of religious ecstasy from the diaries of St. Theresa of Avila to show the connection and also to illustrate quite poignantly how women throughout history have been forced to shunt their passions and connections into non-sexual realms in order to survive. Transcendence is in many ways the key theme in *Women Who Love Sex*, but it is a new, more empowering type of transcendence than the old, self-sacrificing forces of religious ecstasy and all-encompassing romance. Healthy sex for women depends on a sense of connection with her partner and her life, it depends on beginning with a strong sense of self, it culminates in *flowing with feelings* and forces that are literally empowering, not in the traditional passive role of being swept off one's feet.

In the final chapter, the author ties her themes of the preceding chapters together into a political framework. The strength of feeling and self-knowledge that flow from sexual pleasure are powerful, Gina Ogden asserts: this is why men have so long tried to subvert all pleasure that women feel. When we reclaim our sexual pleasure and sexuality, we break the cycle of control in a personal and resoundingly important way. When women control what they enjoy, men will not be able to torment us with unattainable body images or embarrass us with slurs and negative stereotypes. What we need, she asserts, is not just the ability to say, "NO," but also the power to say, "YES."

Dr. Ogden is careful to include women of all sexual orientations, and one chapter centers around a woman who has left a failed relationship with a man and then becomes involved with a woman.

I had one criticism of this book, which is that sexuality and sexual feelings are defined very broadly. To some of these women, it seems, there is nothing that cannot be sexual so long as they are healthily connected and open to the experience. This is a disturbing concept to me — I believe in connection and transcendence, but must they always have a sexual element? Also, this broad definition strikes me as one that could be exploited

BOOK REVIEW *continues on page 15*

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plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 50¢ postage and handling) to:

BBWN

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Cambridge, MA
02140

Play Tennis?

If you play tennis and are an intermediate to advanced player, please call Susan Santucci in Cambridge at (617) 354-3599 to arrange a match. She is level 3.5 (almost 4.0) and welcomes playing with new tennis partners.

✓ Calls for Submissions

Are you a disabled dyke, two-spirited bisexual or transgendered woman?? We want your writing for an anthology!!

Stories, poems, narrative, and other writing as well as visual art (in black and white). We need more submissions from disabled Asian, Latina, African Canadian, African American and Two-Spirited women to constitute real representation.

Write: Shelly Tremain,
c/o Women's Press
(address below)

An anthology by lesbians about the men in our lives – brother, father, lover, son, friend. We encourage a diverse mix of women – disabled women, Arab, Asian, Black, First Nation, Jewish, Latin, women over fifty, women in their teens – to write about their (good and bad) relationships with the men in their lives.

We are looking for poems and short fiction. Write: Counter the Myths from Within and Outside,
c/o Women's Press
(address below)

Call for submissions from lesbians who are Caribbean-born, culturally identified, or of Caribbean parentage.

We are a collective of Caribbean born lesbians compiling an anthology of fictional or autobiographical stories about lesbians from the Caribbean. We will interview women who don't write, who are poor, don't consider themselves lesbians, who hate the word lesbian, who are not political, who are not part of "the community" who are over fifty and over, who are below twenty.

Writers and interviewees may use pseudonyms.

Deadline: April 30, 1995

Send to: Caribbean Women's Anthology, c/o Women's Press, 233-517 College St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 4A2

Inside BBWN, from page 1

enough to talk about their sexuality. I try to make the atmosphere comfortable, trusting, but it still feels like a gift when people share their stories.

I've gotten so much out of seeing people connect, seeing them pick up the strength to go back to their daily lives, and maybe to go back out and do organizing. This is true for me and it's great to see it in other people.

What would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

I'd like to see it be a real social and emotional support for people. I don't see it at this point as being a jumping off point for political action, but more as a supportive function... a great place to get support and make social connections.

I'd like to see more alliances with Biversity, I think we should pool resources more. There is a need for women-only events, but I'd like to see a stronger alliance between groups. That way resources will be less spread out, more consolidated.

The groups don't have to totally meld but form a strong alliance. Although for me, I wouldn't mind if it was just one group with a women's component. But that's flexible.

I also feel that there are no group meetings to set up the network and that's something that we're needing. I think we need more communication and organization and a forum for people to get together and talk about BBWN and Biversity, so we can find out where things are at and what is going on.

Sometimes I feel isolated, there's no forum, no place to find people to help cover the intro meetings or to find someone who might want to take it over when I pass it on.

I'd like there to be room for people to be involved at whatever level they can handle. People can make different commitments but it should be possible for them to still feel connected.

Charnan Bray

Interviewed by Linda Blair

What do you do in or for BBWN?

I got involved with BBWN in 1982. Back then I was in charge of the calendar section of the newsletter, helped out with the newsletter mailings and submitted articles periodically. Since then I've been involved with organizing the Pride Day brunches quite a few times, which is always a fun event that's kept getting bigger and bigger over the years.

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

In 1982 I went to a bi women's meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center. This and later meetings set the foundation for BBWN to get started. There were about 30 of us there and it was an uplifting, exciting, energized group. Nobody talked about being bi in those days and I'd barely heard the word bisexual before this meeting.

We went to Provincetown as a planned social

event the next weekend and we were all really excited at having a space to be bi. This initial group of women were very diverse, and very diverse looking, with some of us very butch and others very feminine, some from straight and some from lesbian backgrounds.

What have you gained from being in BBWN?

Personal connections are definitely the most important thing I've gotten out of my involvement with BBWN. Some of the people from that first meeting are still among my closest friends. I also value having found a place where I could let all the sides of myself loose and just be myself. Before BBWN I'd been pretty active in the lesbian community, but it felt like yet another narrow closet. I remember, for example, feeling that I'd never go right from work (wearing a skirt or a dress) to a meeting in the lesbian community. But with BBWN, I don't have to worry. If I'm wearing a dress, or looking femme that day, or with a man or with a woman, it's all fine.

What would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

We take ourselves a bit too seriously. We should have more fun. We have a great chance to meet people here. Boston is the only city I can think of where you can be a part of such a strong bi community and I think it's great. BBWN should continue to prioritize the newsletter. I've seen it change so much over the years. It used to be a real "cut and paste" job and it's looking really impressive these days.

Claire Morton

Interviewed by Susan Santucci

What do you do for or in the network?

I've been going primarily to newsletter stuffs and brunches.

- In a newsletter stuff, boxes of newsletters
- and flyers to renew one's newsletter subscription get folded and put in envelopes.
- Address labels are attached, and the envelopes are stacked and arranged by zip
- code for bulk mailing. One of the important things about the newsletter stuffs is that
- they are social. (A few people there seem to know what zip codes to arrange the newsletters in, and in which newsletters to put a renewal flyer.)

How did you first get involved in BBWN?

I went to a conference at Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Cambridge in 1985 that was put on by different bi groups. I saw the ad for this conference in the Boston Phoenix newspaper.

How long have you been in the network?

Since 1985.

What have you gotten out of being involved in BBWN?

I've met some really great women. My attending BBWN meetings led to my joining a second support group which was invaluable to me at a time

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when I didn't have anyone in my life to talk to about these issues. It's a good way to keep in touch with what's going on for bi people around the world on all sorts of issues. I've met bi people from around the world.

What would you want to see BBWN do in the future?

More frequent social events that bring people together.

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Self-interviewed

How are you involved in BBWN?

I go to some of the social events — the brunches, etc. Also, I've been helping with the newsletter, both going to the volunteer nights and helping out there and also doing stuff at home to help, writing a couple of articles. I interviewed a couple of the other people who are featured in this issue. I hope to help even more, but I keep adding new things to my schedule, I'll just have to see what time I have.

How did you first get involved?

I went to one of the intro meetings at the Women's Center. I had heard from somebody that there was a bi women's program there, and when I called, the BBWN intro meeting was the next week, so I went to that. Ann Goglia led the meeting; she suggested that going to the newsletter stuffing was a good first activity because it was structured, you had something to do. I took her advice, and began going to the newsletter stuffings, then some of the brunches.

I had heard of BBWN before I moved to Boston—a lesbian friend in New York told me about the network, and then I bought a book on bisexuality which had the address, so I knew who to call once I decided to get involved and had moved to Boston.

How long have you been involved?

Not very long. It's approaching a year and a half. I moved to the Boston area in the late summer of 1993, and got involved early that fall.

I'm just at the point (because I don't go to every activity and the newsletter only comes out every other month) that I'm really getting to know people, to feel that no matter what activity I go to, I'll know a couple of people there, at least. So if anyone is reading this who got discouraged, I urge you to come back. It takes time to fit into a small community, but it does happen if you let it.

What have you gotten out of being involved in BBWN?

I've met many people...in some ways, the Bi groups (BBWN and Biversity) have been my social network. Except for a couple of college friends, I don't know many people in Boston, still, and it's good to have a group of accepting people to belong to, and structured activities to go to when you need to get out of the house and talk to someone new.

With BBWN in particular, it's great being involved in a women's group, and in a group which has an accepting, progressive attitude but isn't political. I remember one brunch I was at where there was a quite intense—but totally friendly—debate on non-monogamy which went on for over an hour. These are issues that are hard to bring up with my friends, even those who are very accepting of bisexuality, so these spaces that BBWN creates during its activities are very valuable for me.

BBWN provides support and food for thought, and those are two things I never tire of receiving.

What would you want to see BBWN do in the future?

Part of me wants to see a more political tilt...but I don't mean that in the conventional sense. I just feel, especially more so with the past election, with right-wing ideas getting more and more time in the media, that we have to take a basic stand that sexuality is normal and healthy...that any sex between consenting adults is good, it's only on the level of responsibility that there are good and bad decisions.

I don't know the best way to go about this, or maybe its being done through other media. If people are interested in quasi-political/philosophical action maybe we can form a discussion group or something. The fact that the Bi organization in San Francisco puts out a magazine called Anything That Moves, with the subtitle "Beyond the Myths of Bisexuality," is the sort of subtle point I'd like to see more of. Maybe BBWN is not the forum for that, I don't know.

Inside BBWN continues on next page

Speak Out!

Write to your newsletter! Send us your letters, poetry, opinions, questions, essays, art, jokes, praise, criticism, news clippings...



BiWomen

BBWN

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA

02140



Beth Israel Hospital



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Gynecology

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In the mail . . .

...the premiere issue of *Token*, the queer magazine published at Columbia University. "...Conceived in the heart of the East Village this past summer," it's a wonderful, diverse 30-page rag full of essays, poetry and art. The table of contents includes such items as Bisexual Politics, Love Your Menses, Outing Bisexual History, and a Queers of Color Manifesto. Info: *Token Magazine*, Box 810, 3001 Broadway, New York, NY 10027-6598; e-mail vcm2@columbia.edu

From Gale Research, Inc., a distributor of research materials for libraries, comes a catalog which includes:

- The National Directory of AIDS Care, about 400 pages of national, state and local info on AIDS/HIV-related care and services. 1994, \$125. Call 1-800-877-GALE.

- Gay and Lesbian Literature, a "compilation of biographical, bibliographical and critical information on approximately 200 authors who have figured prominently in Gay and Lesbian literature and culture since 1900." 1994, about 400 pages, \$85. Call 1-800-345-0392.

Also from Gale, a magazine called *Collect!*, a "collection development tool for librarians." Featured:

- *Notable Black American Women*, informative biographies on about 500 successful, inspiring women. Edited by Jessie Carney Smith, 1,333 pages, 1992, \$85.

- *Epic Lives, 100 Black Women Who Made a Difference*. This is a smaller volume with essays from *Notable Black American Women*. 632 pages, 1992, \$18.95.

- *Notable Hispanic American Women*, providing "lively, informative profiles of 274 Hispanic American women who have achieved national or international prominence." 485 pages, 1993, \$65. Write: Gale Research, P.O. Box 33477, Detroit, MI 48232.

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I'd love to see a reading group of some sort, ideally a mix of some serious books about sexuality and bisexuality, maybe some feminists books, and some fiction or science fiction with bisexual characters.

Most of all I'm just interested in staying with the group and cementing the friendships and acquaintances I've made. And helping as much as I can.

J.B.

Interviewed by Linda Blair

When did you first get involved with BBWN and in what ways are you or have you been involved with the network?

I haven't been around much lately, but soon after I moved to Boston in 1992 I started to co-facilitate BBWN Intro Meetings, attend newsletter stuffings, monthly brunches, and meetings. I also helped organize the '92 and '93 BBWN brunches on Pride Day. In 1993, I also worked as an organizer for BiFest, a two day celebration of bisexuality with workshops and events held on Pride weekend.

How did you first get involved?

My ex-partner was an activist and he was the one who really got me interested in Bi activism. I was involved in Bi political work in college and I had been familiar with BBWN and the other Boston Bi groups through the Internet. In fact, the strength of the Bi community in Boston was one of the reasons I chose to move here after school.

Once I got here, though, things were in a state of flux and it was hard to find out what was going on. The Gay Community Center had just closed, but between the queer newspapers, the Cambridge Women's Center and word of mouth, I was able to piece together how to get on mailing lists and get involved.

What have you gotten out of your involvement with BBWN?

The chance to meet other bi women is the most valuable thing I've gotten out of my involvement with BBWN. I work with a lot of homophobic and biphobic people and even with gay and lesbian friends and acquaintances there's often some underlying assumption that one day you're going to "grow up and choose." So it's great to be able to hang out with other bi women and be accepted for exactly who I am.

With BBWN I've also gotten the chance to get involved and feel like I'm contributing to the Les/Bi/Gay community, which is important to me.

What kinds of things would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

That's a hard question. I think it's really something that the network is struggling over and has been for over a year now. It was a major discussion at last year's tenth anniversary planning meeting. First of all, it's very important to keep the newsletter going as a way of keeping people connected to the Bi community and to each other.

There's a lot of us out there, but we're pretty scattered because there's so many queer groups that encompass bisexuals. That's not a bad thing, but it would be great to have a Lesbian/Bi/Gay center with a bisexual wing - or at least a room where you could just go and hang out. (The bi office in town is no substitute because it's too small and inaccessible.) I wish I had the money to fund it, but since I don't, I don't see it happening any time soon. There's plenty of events to attend, but it's sad that the only place people can just go spontaneously are the bars.

Kathleen Hepburn

Self-interview

What do you do in or for BBWN?

Mainly I work on the newsletter. I work with Linda Blair to gather materials and get it typed into the computer. Then generally I do the layout, which takes 12 to 16 hours total. Because it is very taxing, I generally don't commit to doing anything else if I can help it.

- How the newsletter is done:
- establish a theme for each issue
- about two weeks before the deadline, get the word out by phone, letter and/or e-mail that the deadline is coming up
- recruit someone to run the newsletter volunteer night
- during and after the volunteer night, organize the potential newsletter material. I use an outline:
- 1.0 local bi news
- 2.0 letters
- 3.0 theme articles
- 4.0 other large or medium-sized articles
- 5.0 small articles (calls for submissions, etc.)
- (6.0 sometimes there's a second theme)
- 7.0 calendar
- I number each article (2.1, 2.2, etc.) as appropriate. This really helps keep things organized.
- type everything into the computer into a readable format (sometimes rewriting or excerpting a long article), making sure each item has a title and a byline, checking spelling and accuracy, and removing extra carriage returns
- figure out and type the calendar for the next couple of months
- sketch a layout
- choose some kind of art or splashy image for the first page
- spend about 16 hours laying it out on the computer. The initial layout takes me only about 2 or 3 hours, but "cleaning it up" takes many more hours - checking facts, filling in information gaps

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Inside BBWN, from preceding page

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

I've been an out bisexual since 1981. I had a series of significant, basically monogamous relationships with men, each lasting 2-3 years, and achieved a sort of bisexual balance in my life by being very active in the Lesbian and Gay community. I didn't know there were others like me. I was uncomfortable in the L&G community, being a bisexual woman involved with a man. I was made to feel not legitimately queer. I would overcompensate by donating hundreds of dollars and hours to my L&G groups. In May of 1989 I discovered the Bi community, went to a conference, and found there were others who would welcome me just as I am. I started getting the newsletter then, and a year later there was a desperate plea for an editor. I am a graphic artist by trade, so answered the plea, and have been doing the newsletter since.

What have you gotten out of being involved in BBWN?

By far, the greatest thing I got was acceptance, which immediately became self-acceptance. I am no longer intimidated by someone saying bisexuals don't exist, or we are confused, or we're not really gay if we love someone of the opposite sex. That used to trigger inner biphobia, but now I just think, "Oh, please, get over yourself. I'm old enough to know myself, thank you very much, and I don't need your guesses as to who I am." It angers me, mostly, because I know how it hurts people who are just coming out.

From doing the newsletter I've gained the satisfaction of knowing that I am doing something to help change the world.

What would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

I'm not much of a "vision" person in BBWN. I think the Network is a pretty amazing thing already. There is one thing: the Network seems to me to be very White and able-bodied. I'd welcome some action in the direction of outreach to non-Anglo women and women with disabilities.

I think any group could use one or two charismatic leaders with lots of time and vision and charm to pull off many of the wonderful ideas women have for the Network—more support

groups, more political action, more social events, more outreach. Maybe those women are reading this right now...

Kathrine Douthit

Self-interview

What do you do in or for BBWN?

I have written two articles for *BiWomen*, but primarily I have been creating *All Bi, Myself*, a fledgling comic strip by and about Bi women.

- Submitting articles and artwork is very
- simple! Mail them by the printed deadline
- offered on the newsletter's second page, or
- bring work along with you to the volunteer
- nights which are spent compiling contents
- for the upcoming newsletters.

I try to make it to the stuffing nights, where the newsletter is prepared for mailing. Be sure to catch this month's cartoon for a thumbnail sketch of that process.

I really enjoy hosting and visiting BBWN brunches.

- Brunches are usually scheduled during
- volunteer nights, when women are asked or
- volunteer to have brunches at their homes
- (roughly one on the first Saturday of every
- month). They're potluck brunches, so
- they're not much work – mostly a matter of
- allowing the Bi office to give out the phone
- number or address to women who are
- interested.

How and when did you first become involved in BBWN?

I first got involved in BBWN by submitting an article about the Colorado boycott in February 1993.

What have you gotten out of being in the Network?

My involvement with BBWN has been so rewarding! The women I have met at meetings, brunches, Pride and newsletter stuffs have been good friends, political solidarity, emotional support, artistic inspiration, great humorists, and real turn-ons! I don't know where I'd be without my sweet-potato recipe from a BBWN brunch. And one of my BBWN cartoons was used in a Dutch Bi magazine, which was a thrill for me, too. But the real joys have been the women themselves.

What would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

For the future – I want BBWN's fabulous newsletter to stay strong – and get a lot more submissions from Bi women everywhere. I'd love to see these pages get even more interesting, exciting, and more art-, fiction-, and poetry-filled than ever. Wendell Phillips said, "The penny-papers of New York do more to govern this country than the White House at Washington." This is a Penny-Paper for the voice of bisexual women. I'd like to see BBWN encourage more women to join in its creation and distribution.

Inside BBWN continues on next page

A note of encouragement -

Dear BiWomen,

... THANK YOU so much for all the hard work you all do to keep us informed and entertained. I am from a rather rural, isolated area where the Bi Community is still growing. I am constantly inspired by BBWN and its members.

Kimberly Ward

Wear your Bi Pride on your chest.

For just \$15 (or \$14 if you come to the Bi Office) you get a Bisexual Pride t-shirt in black or deep purple sizes small to xx-large. Please indicate size and color with order.

Make check out to BBWN and send to:
BBWN, attn. Stephanie/T-shirts, 95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston, MA 02116. Order NOW!

- Distribution of BBWN
- is very informal. At
- the end of a newsletter stuffing evening,
- women volunteer to
- bring stacks of the
- newsletter to various
- places: Glad Day,
- New Words, Crone's
- Harvest, the
- Women's Center,
- plus any college
- groups, conferences
- or events that people
- are going to.

How do you get to the Bi Office? And how do you get inside?

by Kathleen

Well, I'll tell you what I know. The Bi Office is at 95 Berkeley Street in the Community Builders building. Take the T to the Back Bay Station (Orange line and commuter rail). Walk out the Clarendon St. exit; you will see Columbus Ave. on your right. Go to Columbus and take a left; go one block, then take a right onto Berkeley. The Building is just over the bridge, on your left.

Getting inside is a bit tricky. If the door is locked, and you think there are folks at the Office, punch in "6-1-3" on the keypad. This dials the phone to the Bi Office. Someone should answer, at which point you say why you're there. Hopefully, they will buzz you in, which means they press "000" on their telephone keypad. Take the elevator to the sixth floor; take a left out of the elevator, then a quick right through the conference room, then a left down the hall. By this time you should hear peals of laughter and merriment, but just in case you haven't, the office is at the end of the hall.

Good luck!

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I would also love to see BBWN organize an artists' guild of some kind and do an art show on bisexual themes.

Laura Perez

Interviewed by Linda Blair

When did you first get involved with BBWN and in what ways are you or have you been involved with the network?

BBWN was instrumental in getting me involved with the bi community. In 1990, I started writing articles for the newsletter and soon became involved with local bi organizing in Boston. Then in 1993 and '94, I helped organize two New England-wide meetings as a Regional BiNet USA

representative, and got heavily involved in working on the '93 March on Washington and Stonewall 25 as a board member of the East Coast Bisexual Network, which changed its name to the Bisexual Resource Center shortly after I joined the board. Through BBWN, I also got involved with *Say It, Sister!*, a feminist collective radio show on WNBR. I hosted four radio shows with them on feminist and queer issues for women of color.

How did you first get involved?

When I first saw the *BiWomen* newsletter at the Cambridge Women's Center, I freaked. I was so happy! I'd just bought a copy of *Bi Any Other Name* in the gay section of some mainstream bookstore and I saw in the newsletter that there was a book signing coming up at Glad Day book-

Inside BBWN continues on next page

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM
ALL Bi, MYSELF by Kathrine Douthitt

HAPPY NEW YEAR-HEY, DID YOU SAY YOU'VE
 • RESOLVED TO BE MORE INVOLVED •
 • IN THE BI COMMUNITY ?!! •
 LET THIS HANDY 'TOON INSPIRE YOU!

I CALL IT:
SO, YOU WANT TO STUFF NEWSLETTERS!

BiWomen Volunteers have been informing and entertaining the Bi-World for more than a decade!

OH, X! *! *! WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THIS!

ONE NIGHT EVERY 2 MONTHS, A DIVERSE, FUN-LOVING GROUP OF WOMEN COMES TOGETHER AT THE BI RESOURCE OFFICE AT 95 BERKELEY STREET TO PREPARE ABOUT 600 NEWSLETTERS FOR MAILING! (SEE THE CALENDAR FOR DATES)

YO! NOT TO WORRY! OUR CARTOONIST HASN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA, BUT DOES THAT STOP HER!? LULU, HONEY, GIVE US THE ROUGH IDEA!

PLEASE DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME...

HAHAHA HAHAHA

IT DOES SORT OF HOLD YOUR ATTENTION & CHAT!

ATTACH ADDRESS LABELS & BULK RATE P.O. STICKERS

ATTACH LABELS ON TOP ENV.

BUNDLE WITH ELASTICS

SORT INTO BAGS

WRITTEN ON THE TOP ENVELOPE OF THE BUNDLE.

SPECIAL THANKS TO GAILZ. FOR LABELS & LAURA S. FOR SCHLEPPING AND ORGANIZING!

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store, so I went. All the people that signed my book that day turned out to be the people I'd work with for the next four years on bi issues and that I'm still working with today.

There was still a Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Services Center then and there was a small but visible bi space there where all the newsletter mailings and meetings were. I went to a BBWN intro meeting and then just started getting involved in general.

What have you gotten out of your involvement with BBWN?

A lot of organizing experience. I now have a better understanding of my own goals as an activist. I've learned that I want to challenge myself and others to continue to push through our fears that stop us from facing our oppressions head on, such as classism, racism, ageism and ableism. And most importantly, I've gotten a lot of loving relationships out of my connection to BBWN. Now that I've moved to San Francisco, I've taken all these wonderful women with me in my heart.

What kinds of things would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

BBWN should foster more leadership from among all the bisexual women in Boston. It also needs to help stop the isolation of queer communities by doing more coalition work. There's so many other groups that we could be working with on HIV/AIDS, women's health and other issues. Finally, it should emphasize promoting bi culture. Our community is filled with writers, dancers, singers, storytellers, performance artists and many other talented individuals. Their collective work is a big part of bi culture and I'd like to see BBWN do more to sustain itself by supporting bi artists.

Laura Sachs

Interviewed by Kathleen Hepburn

What do you do in or for the Network?

In the past I have, among other things, been a newsletter editor, ran newsletter stuffings, attended scores of coordinating committee meetings, coordinated BBWN Intro Meetings (solo or with someone else), gone on speaking engagements, and was part of the group who gave Bisexuality workshops to the Gay, Lesbian Speakers' Bureau to help them change their name to include Bisexual. Out of one of the BBWN Intro Meetings, I helped women start the Bi Women's Rap Group. For many years I coordinated our involvement in Boston Pride (registration, permits, space, transportation of tables and stuff). I consider myself a BBWN ambassador to every other group I am involved in or have contact with – the GLB Speakers Bureau, Gay Community News, The Bisexual Resource Center, Sojourner – and I think it's really important for BBWN members to be active in other gay groups. I'm proud of the work I do in being an out bisexual in these other groups.

These days I pick up the mail at the Post Office in Porter Square about every other week. BBWN shares a Post Office box with the Bisexual Resource Center. I sort out the mail, keeping the BRC mail and giving Stephanie Berger the BBWN mail.

I occasionally put listings into Sojourner for their Pride issue and Resource Guide issue. I am a contact for the Women's Center if they get phone calls about BBWN and bisexuality.

For the past 6 or so years I have handled getting our envelopes printed, in quantities of 10 or 15 thousand.

Every other month I schlep hundreds of newsletters from the Bi Office to the Post Office General Mail Facility (behind South Station) the day after the newsletter stuff.

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

In 1981 I went to the New England Lesbian/Gay conference at Boston University, and went to a workshop on bisexuality. I introduced myself to one of the workshop panelists, who eventually connected me to a workshop at the Women's Center in Cambridge. There were at least 50 women there, from which a support group formed that I participated in for over 6 months. Somehow I got on a mailing list and got the BBWN newsletter. I missed the first Bi conference in 1984, but went to the first retreat. Had such an incredible life-opening experience at that retreat, and made a commitment to not miss other events. I began volunteering, pouring my heart and soul into the network. Although the support group broke up, the woman from that first conference in 1981 still a dear, close, lifelong friend.

What have you gotten out of being involved with BBWN?

It changed my life.

I became connected to a larger community of men and women through the network. I went from having one or two friends to forming a peer group of primarily women because of my involvement with BBWN. It gave me the opportunity to expand my world, in terms of meeting women with backgrounds incredibly different from my own. It gave me opportunity for the first time in my life to establish friendships that will be with me for my entire life. It gave me space to evolve and grow, flourish, make mistakes and learn in such a way that I didn't have to shut off who I was anymore. The incredible luxury of being able to make healthy connections, because I didn't have to censor what I was saying, was exquisitely nurturing.

BBWN has provided a safe space for me to develop relationships, to explore levels of intimacy that were not available to me before.

I have been able to use and develop my organizing and troubleshooting skills, and my graphic arts skills (laying out the newsletter).

What would you want to see BBWN do in the future?

The sense of connection with other bi women

Inside BBWN continues on next page

Please send art!

Your tireless editors are always looking for copyright-free art for the pages of BiWomen. Are you a budding artist? Send us your sketches!

Thanks!



Call for Sessions

The Fifth Annual Women's Studies Conference: The Fate of Feminism: Is there a Next Generation?, at Southern Connecticut State University, seeks submissions for session proposals. Session formats include, but are not limited to, roundtable discussions, workshops, paper presentations, and performances. Deadline: Postmarked by April 1, 1995. Conference date: September 30-October 1, 1995. For more info, contact Karen Radmani, (203) 392-6747, e-mail: radman@scsud.ctstateu.edu or Vera Neverow: (203) 392-6717, e-mail: neverow@scsud.ctstateu.edu.

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from so many other backgrounds, who have so many strengths and talents and stories to share in support of each other, is what really has been most significant for me, and I feel like a significant number of women that have been active over the years have lost connection with each other. I'd like us to find a way to positively reconnect with each other, to check in as to where we are in our lives, instead of being fragmented. We need to have the patience with each other to take the time to do that. Being bisexual in a hostile world, and having to struggle with that, is exhausting, especially for any of us who are going through internal or external struggles in our day to day lives. I'd like to somehow recapture that feeling of community, connection and support, and for us to be able to share who we are with each other. We're sort of not communicating with each other, and therefore don't have much direction as a group. I like us to be able to come together more. The Boston Bisexual women's community can be a wonderful place to be connected with. There have been a lot of changes in this world to contend with. We need to be able to support not only ourselves but younger people, college and high school and younger ages. Also, in terms of having an identity, we need a better idea of who we are, and what our purpose is, so we can be more proactive and connect with other LesBiGay organizations.

Linda Blair

Interviewed by Kathleen Hepburn

What do you do for or in the Network?

Mostly I co-edit the newsletter. This involves working with Kathleen to plan the newsletter; organizing and editing the articles on the computer; and sometimes coordinating volunteer nights. I usually type, edit, put the articles in the format needed for layout, and I'm learning how to lay it out on the computer. I wrote my first article for last issue's newsletter, about being out at work. I was glad to be able to share my thoughts with other women in the network.

I help with the newsletter stuffing, which is a great way to meet people. I also enjoy going to brunches.

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

In 1992 I had read *Bi Any Other Name*, which is a fantastic book and had a strong impact on me. In the back of the book was a resource list of bi groups in various cities. I was excited to see there were several bi groups in the Boston area, and one of them was BBWN. I picked up the newsletter at the '92 Pride March in Boston, and saw that there was a BBWN Intro Meeting in about two weeks at the Women's Center in Cambridge. I was excited and a little scared. The newsletter said call to confirm the location, so I did, and they said they didn't know anything about it. I called the woman who was running it, she said there had been a mix-up, and there was another one in two

months. Two months! Fortunately, there was a Women's Center Bi Rap Group the next night, so I went to it. A week or so later I went to my first newsletter stuffing and got more involved from there.

What have you gotten out of being involved with BBWN?

A lot of good friends. Meeting wonderful women. That first newsletter stuffing I sat between a woman who later became a partner, and a woman who later became my roommate and really close friend. I gained confidence in myself, and felt acceptance from the community. I wasn't quite sure if I would fit in. I had never been involved with a woman before, but that was perfectly OK. And it was a safe atmosphere to discover if other women would find me attractive.

What would you want to see BBWN do in the future?

First of all, I'd like to see BBWN do some political work. The Radical Right is obviously on a roll, and those of us with alternative sexualities must be involved in a political arena to advocate for our rights before we lose what gains we've made.

I'd like to see more social things, like parties, dances, discussion groups. We do brunches and the newsletter stuffing, which are good.

I think we need to be more visible in the queer community and beyond. Personally, it took effort for me to find out about this group. Even the Bi table at Pride was small and hard to find when I was specifically searching for it, and understaffed when I got there. Things are changing for the better, and I want that to continue. We need to respond quickly when people show interest, and get ourselves listed everywhere possible.

Liz Nania

Interviewed by Linda Blair

How and when did you first get involved with BBWN, and what do you do now in the Network?

I've been a member of BBWN for 11 years. I started out going to conferences and events, helping out in small ways, getting my feet wet and getting used to my bi identity. Then after about four years, Lucy F. and I decided we should have a bi contingent in the 1987 March on Washington. We did almost all the organizing for this. I've always believed in consensus building, but sometimes it's not the best way to get things done and this was one of those times. It was a real high! About 200 of us marched together, with probably 100 more people getting lost trying to find us. We had our first national bi gathering that weekend and I remember the feeling in the room was just electric. It was awesome - everyone was just blown away! There was no bi visibility paraphernalia back then at all. Absolutely zero. I remember the only thing that even came close that I'd seen til that point was a button that said "Half Gay," and I knew we could do a lot better than that. I considered myself a serious activist at the time, but I

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took it upon myself to design some bi merchandise to be sold at the march. That was when I designed the Bi Pride double triangle, which BBWN sold on buttons at the march, then on T-shirts later on.

After that I worked with Lucy again on BiCEP, the Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics, a small affinity group of Boston bi activists. We did a lot of grassroots direct action to promote bi visibility, like plastering Bi Pride stickers all over Harvard Square. We also produced and distributed some "great Bi-101" type literature, like "50 Steps to Bi Visibility."

These days I'm an artist, not a political organizer. But I still help out once in a while, and on February 11 I'll be giving swing and waltz dance lessons at Biversity Boston's ballroom dance, so please come and have a good time. It will be a blast!

What have you gotten out of your involvement with BBWN?

The main thing I've gotten out of my involvement with BBWN has been validation as a bisexual. Even after 11 years of identifying as bi, that internalized biphobia is still hanging on, so I get a real shot of affirmation by being around other bi women. It seems that many younger people in the community, say under 30, don't have these issues so much, and I wish it would "trickle up" faster.

I've also learned a lot working with BBWN, especially as an activist, and made connections with some wonderful people.

What kinds of things would you like to see BBWN do in the future?

I would like to see BBWN more active on issues of bi visibility in the straight, gay and lesbian communities. So many people out there are still totally in the dark and don't even know what bisexuality is. The day after I came out to a co-worker a few years ago she thanked me for my honesty and told me that I was the first person she'd ever met who was "what'd you call it - bionic". I find I still have to dispel myths and misinformation too. It's arduous.

BBWN should definitely continue with the newsletter, which is great, and make more of an effort to get it out there. There's zillions of women who could benefit from the network, but who don't know about it.

It also needs to provide a social function with brunches and other events. As bisexual women, there are a lot of issues we face that we need to be with other bi women to work out, so it's really important for BBWN to be there.

Marcia Deihl

Interviewed by Kathleen Hepburn

What do you do in or for the network?

I was one of the founders of the network, and did a lot of organizing in its early years. Nowa-

days I do most of my political activism within the Cambridge Lavender Alliance, a progressive organization of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. I often write articles for *BiWomen* newsletter (as well as *Sojourner* and - about a year ago - a big piece for *Harvard Review* all about the bisexual movement, the March on Washington, multiculturalism and class-awareness in our movement - it was very exciting for me that *Harvard Review* printed it!). Writing as a bisexual woman is important to me. In fact, I'm currently writing my memoirs.

At Pride marches I split my time between the Lavender Alliance and the bi contingent, sometimes on my bi-cycle. A high point for me was riding at head of Dykes on Bikes with my Bi-cycle.

I also hosted a brunch this past year.

How and when did you first get involved in BBWN?

In 1981, I was in a bisexual rap group at the Women's Center in Cambridge, and another in 1982. The second group became the BiVocals. It was the eight of us BiVocals who started the Boston Bisexual Women's Network (see *BiWomen* October/November 1994). We organized a meeting, and over 50 women showed up! That was the beginning of BBWN.

What have you gotten out of the Network?

Being involved in the bi community gives me permission to be an unabashed bisexual, and to write about my experiences. I came from a leftist-feminist background, I hated being politically correct while the "other half" of me being was being politically incorrect (by being attracted to men). I feel less self-conscious in the Bi community. I can be 100% bisexual, no matter where I am or who I'm with. I feel acceptance; as a political person, I need that. And I need to know that there are others like me. The Bi identity just blows away all that all-straight/all-gay polarity bullshit. This community gives me permission to have the political/sexual identity of Bisexual.

What would you like to see the Network do in the future?

Keep doing what its doing - the newsletter, the brunches, the general support. I'm not very involved anymore, but I depend on these things and participate when I can. I appreciate being able read the newsletter and to write for it. I am local in my activism. I have a good feeling about grassroots, neighborhood activism. That's what I like about the Cambridge Lavender Alliance, and working for the first out lesbian Cambridge City Councilor, Katherine Triantafillou. Having a Bi presence in these groups gets the "B"-word out there. I feel that, in a way, I'm a part of the reason that Cambridge is inviting the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Irish group to march in their St. Patrick's Day parade this year. (Please, all Irish Bi's and supporters come to Cambridge for the parade!). It's kind of lonely not being so involved in the work of BBWN, but I'm very glad it's being done.

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Advertise in BiWomen!

For only **\$10 per issue**, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25.

Send your business-card sized ad **or personal ad** (50 words or less) and a check (to BBWN) to:

**BiWomen, c/o
BBWN, P.O. Box 639,
Cambridge, MA
02140**

Such a deal!

OFFICE TALK

by Kimberly A. Ward

"I'm Bisexual.

Silence.

Sporadic coughs and mumbles.

"Yes, Tod told you the truth. I AM Bisexual."

"What does that mean, exactly?"

"Well, to put it this way, I like steak and I like lobster, but I don't eat them both at once."

Quizzical stares. Nervous, uncertain laughter.

(This goes on for days on end.)

"Well, did you hear this one? These two guys who are golfing buddies die and go to heaven. They ask to come back as two Lesbians. God asks them why. They answer, 'So we can eat all the pussy we want and golf from the red tees.'"

Laughter.

"Well, WE heterosexual women are offended by that one."

Rolling eyes.

"Well, I'm not."

Silence. Sporadic scraping of chairs and shuffling of feet.

(Somewhere in there, some actual work gets done.)

"But, tell me ladies, don't you LOVE Captain Picard with that gorgeous bald head?"

"AND Sinead O'Conner's"

"Yeah, PLEASE!"



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Robyn Ochs

Interviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

How are you involved in BBWN?

I've been treasurer for five years and I've been a member of the Coordinating Committee since BBWN's birth in 1983. I'm one of the two women (Marcia Deihl and I) who've been active throughout BBWN's existence. You could say we're "Mama Deihl" and "Mama Ochs."

How did you first get involved?

In 1982, I moved to Boston and within 2 weeks of moving joined a newly formed support group of women which we called the BiVocals. And the BiVocals was the group which was the seed from which BBWN was born one year later.

I had just moved from Suburban Connecticut and I was starving to meet other bi-identified people, other bi-identified women.

BBWN—and BiVocals—was an oasis. The eight women who formed BiVocals were very diverse; you won't find eight more different women. But it was an opportunity to learn and grow.

How long have you been involved?

Feels like forever.

What have you gotten out of being involved with BBWN?

BBWN has been my training ground for activism, it's always been a safe space, and most of my closest friends who I've met over the past 12 years I met through BBWN. Three of my closest friends in Boston are all BBWN-based friendships, and I met them all in the 1980's. My other closest friend is a member now, I recruited her.

What would you want BBWN to do in the future?

I have lots of ideas—more intellectual/discussion oriented activities. One of my fantasies is a quarterly discussion/lecture series in which one woman (for example, a local author who contributed to *Closer to Home: Bisexuality and Feminism*) would discuss her article or essay and then there'd be a group discussion of the article.

At least six local women contributed to *Closer to Home*. So for example, I could speak on "Bisexuality, Feminism, Men, and Me," which was my piece in the book. I'd talk about it for 20-30 minutes and then have a discussion.

All it needs is someone to organize it. We have all the local authors. Someone just needs to say that she we will arrange for a space three or four times a year..... I don't have the time to do it.

But I think BBWN needs that—we have social events, we have one of the best bi newsletters in the country. We're missing food for the mind. That's the main thing I think we're missing.

BBWN used to have general meetings, usually on a topic. They always drew 30 or 40 women, they were successful. But then no one was willing to volunteer to take it on, so it stopped. Someone dropped the ball but no one picked it up.... it just needs someone to pick it up.

I go all over the country doing workshops, but I have never done one for BBWN. We have people locally. It's ironic that all these people who do things elsewhere aren't being used by BBWN. It would just be 3 or 4 events a year.

Another thing that was done in the past was a reading group. Seattle's Bi women's group has a successful reading group now. You'd meet once a month, discuss a book. Advertise it locally, maybe in *Sojourner* or *Bay Windows*.

That's the kind of thing I'd love to see BBWN do more of—and it's ebbed and flowed in the past. Because we are an all-volunteer group with no formal leadership, what happens or not depends on the initiative of each of its members. One person with a good idea is all it takes. We have the money to rent a room or buy refreshments or pay for postage. It just needs someone creative and energetic.

Stephanie Berger

Interviewed by Kathleen Hepburn

What do you do in the network?

Oye!

How and when did you first get involved?

I first heard about the network at a Feminism and Sexuality conference in Boston held in 1985. I went to a workshop sponsored by BBWN – and came out that night. I've been on the mailing list since then (roughly) and didn't go to my first BBWN event until 1988. I went to a BBWN Intro Meeting at the Women's Center facilitated by Heidi and Laura, and shortly thereafter became co-editor with Laura on *BiWomen*. A group of other women who went to that meeting started the Bi Women's Rap at the Women's Center. I continued to be co-editor, then editor then co-editor again with Ann Goglia until I left for Australia in 1990. Prior to leaving I was on the steering committee (which we don't have anymore) and was a coordinator for the 1989 conference at Harvard. Since then I've been the volunteer coordinator—the position is still open. I returned phone calls made to the office, dealt with all our mail and returned letters. I also helped hook people into projects depending on what their interests were... Good way to get gossip... I have been a facilitator and initiator of various BBWN projects and re-evaluations. Currently I deal with the selling of merchandise - i.e. T-shirts and buttons which I really don't want to do anymore, and get the mail from the P.O. Box. Yes, that's right folks! I've seen every letter you've sent to the P.O. Box for the past four years and I know where you all live [grin]... seriously, though, I answer letters to folks looking for info, advice or just to know they are not the only ones out there who is bi and feels alone. I used to do a lot more upfront BBWN stuff but these days I seem to do more behind the scenes kind of stuff like helping Kathy/Linda find authors for *BiWomen*, occasionally sending in odds and ends, mainly being an all-around resource person and clearing house for peoples ideas or

Inside BBWN continues on next page

Inside BBWN, from preceding page

projects—you know like matching the people to the project. I like to think I help initiate things—say the Pride Brunch for instance—whether I actually am a key organizer or not.

And of course I'm always recruiting!!

What have you gotten out of it? What has the network done for you?

I think when I first came to Boston after trying to be out as bi in Northampton I embraced the Boston Bi community with a vengeance. I had felt rather isolated from the lesbian community in Northampton at the time, and also felt pretty burnt.

It felt like such a luxury to me to do BI ONLY things—that is pretty much what I did for about two years. I felt "seen" and accepted for my sexuality—for once... I think as time has gone on I have gotten less support from the community I once felt a part of. I'm not sure it's the fact that the support is gone or just the nature of time. I have different needs then I did 7 years ago when I first moved to Boston, and BBWN unfortunately has not kept up with them—or I haven't been able/or willing to change it to better reflect those needs. I'm also not sure *any* network of any kind has to do that all the time.

My focus these days as far as bi political stuff has more been on the regional and national level—with my involvement as a N.E. regional rep for BiNet. And organizing bi community meetings in the area. For me the impetus has always been more political in nature then social per say...

I honestly believe BBWN will always be there. I'm not sure what we are outside of a newsletter and brunches in terms of any cohesive group; but if the need is strong enough to change the nature of things, women will do so...

What would you want the network to be doing now or in the future?

Hmmm that's a tough one to answer and an easy one... I suppose I've been rambling on for years about what I think the network should be or do... but ultimately I'd like the network to be a source of empowerment for bi women... to teach women to be leaders in their communities, our communities and in their own lives.

Susan Santucci

Self-interview

What do you do for or in the network?

I occasionally volunteer to be the coordinator at a BiWomen volunteer night, which is listed in the Calendar section.



- At the end of each volunteer night, a person is selected to be the coordinator for the next newsletter night. The new coordinator then gets the key so that next time she can arrive at the Bi Office at 95 Berkeley Street at 7:30pm to let people in.
- The coordinator takes the mail from the tray on top of the filing cabinet in the Bi Office and distributes it to the volunteers. The tray usually has BBWN mail that has been collected from the Post Office box over the past two months and labeled for BBWN and/or BiWomen. We read through the mail, selecting out pieces of information to put in the newsletter. We sort the it into the following categories: "to be typed", "to be excerpted", "calendar" and "archives".
- The archives stuff (such as newsletters from other bi groups, or newspaper articles addressing bisexuality) stays in the Bi Office, to be filed at some later point into the Bisexual Resource Center Archives. There's also a "been typed" folder which gets filled up as we go. Ideally, a laptop computer is available on volunteer night to type in the information. Typing the information saves Kathleen, our valued editor and newsletter producer, much time in producing the newsletter. Excerpting is interesting and challenging. It involves reading articles and press releases, and summarizing them into one- or two-sentence blurbs.
- The coordinator should get the names or initials of the people at the volunteer night so they can be listed in the newsletter as part of the editorial team. The coordinator gives all inputted information on disk and/or sorted stacks to Linda or Kathleen, who then prepare the newsletter.
- It's a very easy and fun job.

How did you first get involved in BBWN?

I picked up a BiWomen newsletter that was distributed at the Bi rap group at the Cambridge Women's Center.

How long have you been in the network?

For about three years.

What have you gotten out of being involved with BBWN?

You get to feel part of a community which as a bi person is often difficult to feel. One of the reasons I like volunteering in BBWN is because the smallest action I do for BBWN makes me feel like a bi activist if even for a day. I feel great satisfaction in knowing that I've done something, however small, to bring a little joy into other people's lives. Doing something to support the bi community helps me to counteract the negativity and hatred I experience from the religious right and other bigots in this world.

What would you want to see BBWN do in the future?

Have more frequent social events that bring people together. Have some potluck dinners and brunches that are open to Bi Space people and BBWN members. Have a phone list of members to call for support and make new friends with.

continued from
preceding page

Rolling eyes again, sticking tongue out.

"I heard that Hillary Rhodham-Clinton is Bisexual."

"No way!"

"WOW!"

Lots of long, uncomfortable silence...

"Hey, there's another one of those winter flies."

"YUK!" (in unison)

"It almost went in my mouth."

"YUK!" (again, unison)

"You almost ate it"

"When I was young, all the boys used to pay Willy Brown a dime for every worm he'd eat. He made quite a bit of money."

Wrinkled noses and funny faces.

"And he DID?"

"A dime was worth a lot of money back then."

"I'd rather eat DOG SHIT!"

"OH NOOO... I'd rather eat a worm, any day."

"Well, this conversation has certainly turned to deep subjects."

(Mumbled over a shoulder)

Havurat Shalom, founded in 1968, is a feminist, egalitarian Jewish community where people of all knowledge levels, ages, sexes, orientations, and backgrounds are welcome to explore, celebrate and grapple with Jewish tradition; work for and collect tzedakah (charity) for social action causes, and discuss a variety of Jewish concerns.

Contact:

Havurat Shalom
113 College Ave.
Somerville, MA 02144
call: 617-623-3376
T accessible, near Davis Sq.
e-mail to heidifm@aol.com.

Bi Choice, from page 1

feelings of same sex attraction and pretending to be heterosexual – or living a full emotional and physical life as a gay or lesbian.¹

I agree that we all have a myriad of sexual feelings which we may experience outside of the realm of conscious choice. However, when dealing with these feelings, there is not only *one* choice, as Marcus claims, of suppressing same sex attraction or living a full life as a gay or lesbian. The framing of this issue as an either/or duality closes the (closet) door to the complex options available to all of us regarding our sexuality. In fact, there are *many* choices which we all face – whether straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or just plain SEXUAL – around physical and emotional intimacy. These choices should not be made light of or simply dismissed. They deserve our attention, consideration, and discussion.

As a bisexual woman, I am constantly faced with sexual choices. Do I seek out a man or a woman for my primary sexual partner? Or do I even have a primary partner? Depending on these decisions, which social group do I go out with? (Unfortunately, lesbians and straight men don't always hang out together.) I am lucky enough to be part of a co-ed bisexual group, but this leaves out my straight and lesbian friends.

which I feel, including an emotional connection, sexual chemistry, intellectual stimulation, a spiritual dimension, and let's not forget pure convenience.

There are often different emphases on the types of attractions I feel depending on if I am with a man or a woman. For instance, I might meet a woman with whom I share a lot of common interests and can feel an immediate bond. We kiss and cuddle and enjoy a physical closeness, but there is not an electric sexual passion. In another case, I may meet a man for whom I feel an overwhelming sexual attraction and with whom I enjoy stimulating conversations. Yet when it comes to discussing feelings, he doesn't have a clue.

I must then try to find the "package" which seems most satisfying overall. These are not easy choices and may require some creativity. Perhaps if I chose to pursue the man I described, I could try to find the missing elements outside this primary relationship. Maybe I could find emotional bonds with a group of close women friends and share common interests with a club of like-minded people. If I chose the relationship with the woman I described above, perhaps I could look for intellectual conversation in a book club and electric sexual passion from my vibrator.

Bisexuality is not static or fixed. It is fluid and changing, and it is shaped by the choices which I make as well as the reactions I get. I believe that most people feel attractions to both men and women to varying degrees. Unfortunately, due to the power of the heterosexist culture in which we live, many people do not recognize these feelings as sexual. In other cases, people may recognize them but choose, or be forced, not to act on them out of fear or punishment.

The communities in which I live help to determine which options are available to me. The college campus which I attended was very open to les/bi/gay issues and created an atmosphere of tolerance. A friend of mine invited me to go with her to a bisexual support group. Without these factors, I may or may not have pursued my interest in women (my interest in men had already fallen easily into place, thanks to our heterosexists culture). After I pick certain options, these, in turn, invoke some sort of response, or lack thereof, from the people in my life. In my case, my explorations were supported by my friends and family. These responses then influence the next set of choices which I make.

I would not choose to give up the privilege of making choices about my sexuality. As difficult as it sometimes is, sexual freedom is far superior to narrowly defined roles and rules. The love and passions with which we are blessed hold tremendous potential and power. We can responsibly direct and channel them in complex and creative ways, smudging the categorical lines which define our identities. Let's not allow a homophobic society to limit our agenda solely to biology and restrict the subjects about which we think and write. Let's celebrate the power of choice.

¹ Eric Marcus, *Is It a Choice?*, Harper San Francisco, 1993, p.9

When I am dating a man, do I make a point of telling him that I also am attracted to women? When I speak of my boyfriend, do I correct people's unspoken assumptions that I am straight, or do I "pass"? Do I choose to be monogamous with my girlfriend and not act on attractions to men (and other women)? Or do I seek out several sexual relationships simultaneously? Do I choose to spend time with my straight friends from school or leave campus to seek out gay circles (or should I say triangles)?

Sometimes these decisions feel empowering and allow freedom. Sometimes they feel stressful and create restraints. But all the time, they feel like *choices*.

I often find myself making choices around my attractions. My attractions to men and women do not fit into neat packages. There are many components of the attractions

off our backs



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CALENDAR *from page 16*

February 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11am at Johnny D's on Holland St., Davis Square, Somerville. Across from the Davis Square stop on the Red Line.

February 19 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, at Ann's in Somerville at noon. All women welcome. Visit the land of seven hills and 15 squares (Somerville, that is). Near the Davis Square T stop. Call (617) 628-1866 for directions.

February 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:30pm at Buddha's Delight on Beach St. in Boston's Chinatown. Vegetarian food. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

February 28 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Night at Grand Opening (Boston area's first sexuality boutique especially, but not exclusively, for women) is hosting a private gathering for Bi's and their friends. The staff will tell us about the latest toys, latex, leather and books. 318 Harvard Street, Brookline. Ring suite 32 on the buzzer. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner on the C branch of the Green Line.

March 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See February 1.

March 3-5 ♦ Friday - Sunday

OutWrite Conference. National Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual writer's conference at the Park Plaza Hotel, Boston.

March 5 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See February 5.

March 7 ♦ Tuesday

IMPORTANT BBWN MEETING!! It's time to think about BBWN: what we are doing and where we are going. Come to this meeting to help guide the Network for the coming year. Bring your vision, your dream, and—most important—*yourself!* It's your Network, now's your chance to help make it what you want it to be. 7-9pm at the Bi Office.
PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!

March 8 ♦ Wednesday

Ice Cream and Change Fundraiser. Everyone has at least one jar of change in their bedroom. Bring it (and/or your checkbook!) to a fundraiser at Sharon's and enjoy some ice cream as we wrap pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters to help support the bi office. If you have a contribution, but can't make it to the party, please drop it off at the bi office or, if it will fit in an envelope, mail it to: Call (617) 497-7646 or email Sharon_Gonsalves@crd.lotus.com for directions. All donations are tax-deductible.

March 10 ♦ Friday

Bi Club Night. 10pm. Slip on your dancing shoes and boogie on down to Man Ray at 21 Brookline Street in Cambridge (just off Mass. Ave.). The closest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

BiWomen deadline!!!!

BOOK REVIEW *from page 3*

and used by men, who could distort or deride the prerequisites of connectedness and openness, ultimately destroying the very empowering effect that the sexual/emotional connection is supposed to have.

Of course, part of me suspects that these women may be right — everything (especially spiritual ecstasy) can be sexual. It may be that it is this dangerous knowledge that hierarchical power-hungry societies have attempted to suppress, by destroying female sexual power and by skewing male sexuality into arenas of violence and domination, and later, in the West, by embracing the doctrine of mind-body duality.

This is only one of the far-reaching questions that this book inspired for me. Reading it will expand your understanding of yourself and of the possibilities for sexual pleasure, whether you have a partner or not. With its insightful notes and suggested reading list, it is also a great — and very personal — introduction to women's issues and the history of women's sex theory. Once you get inside the cover of this revolutionary book, it is guaranteed to open your eyes.

March 12 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, at Laura's in Allston at noon. Great food (don't forget, it's potluck!), spiffy conversation, bitchen babes and gobs o' fun. Call (617) 782-2389 for directions.

March 13 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. Help compile the newsletter. No experience necessary, and a great way to get to know other BBWN members in a relaxed atmosphere. Read the mail, maybe do some typing. 7:30pm at the Bi Office.

March 14 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See February 1.

March 15 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. See February 15.

March 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch at Thornton's at 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

March 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch will be at Christopher's at 1920 Mass. Ave. in Porter Square. The closest T stop is Porter on the Red Line.

March 27 ♦ Monday

The famous BBWN Newsletter Stuffing Volunteer Night. Help get this great rag into the mail! Great conversation, advice, laughs. OK, slightly tedious work, but definitely the more the merrier. Meet the women you've been reading about! 7-9pm at the Bi Office.

Ongoing Events

(continued from p. 16)



Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting.

8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance

Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

Every Other

Saturday:

"Write with Women"

12:30-2:30 at the Women's Center in Cambridge. Short writings on personal topics in a friendly, positive atmosphere. Info: Women's Center at (617) 354-8807.

Looking ahead...

The Northeast Regional Bisexual Community Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 6, in Portland, Maine. Your help is needed for this important event! Please contact Kirsten Isgro at 802-658-9554 or Stephanie Berger at 617-666-3149 or via e-mail at virago@world.std.com

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual
Resource Office, 95
Berkeley Street, Suite
613, Boston.

(617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:

Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women,
6:30-8:30pm at the
Women's Theological
Center, 140 Clarendon St.,
6th fl., Boston. No charge,
donation requested. Info:
(617) 536-8782.

Fourth Mondays:

**Women and Disability
Think Tank.** 7pm 4th
Monday of every month,
282 Lamartine St, JP. Info:
Connie Panzarino, Project
on Women & Disability,
524-0921. Wheelchair
accessible. ASL by request.

Tuesdays:

**Bisexual Women's Rap
Group.** 7:30-9:30pm at the
Cambridge Women's
Center, 46 Pleasant Street,
Central Square, Cambridge.
All women welcome. Info,
topics: (617) 354-8807.

**Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual
Freedom Trail Band
Rehearsals.** Concert and
marching band, no
auditions. 7:30-9:30pm.
Location and info: Kathy
(617) 628-6219.

1st & 3rd

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Issues Rap Group
at the New Haven
Women's Center, 614
Orange St., (corner Bishop)
New Haven, Conn. Call to
specify wheelchair access
or ASL interpreting needs.
Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY
and voice (203) 397-2381.



(continued on p. 15)

CALENDAR

February 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required) to help pay for space. Info: (617)338-9595.

February 3-4 ♦ Friday-Saturday

The New Political Reality: Taking Back the Agenda. A regional conference to "help progressives seize the initiative" at the Omni Parker House in Boston sponsored by the Northeast Citizen Action Resource Center (NECARC). Fees are \$20 Fri only, \$40 Sat. only, \$35 Sat. dinner only, \$80 for all three. Call (203) 231-2410 for info. Scholarships available.

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February 5 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. Bi Space takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

February 10-12 ♦ Friday-Saturday

1995 Vanderbilt Lambda Association Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Conference. Info: Box 7076-B, Nashville, TN 37235 or email to slomowr@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu, or call (615) 343-1318 and leave a message.

February 11 ♦ Saturday

Valentine's Ballroom Dance. Biversity and Swingtime are co-sponsoring this sensational event at Ballet Etc studio, 185 Corey Rd., Brookline, near the B or C branches of the Green Line T. No experience or partner necessary. Smoke/alcohol free. Learn to swing/jitterbug and waltz in a beginning lesson from 8- 9pm. Wear your finest and funkiest. Admission is \$6-\$10 (sliding scale) and includes lesson, refreshments, and parking. For work exchange or info call Rachelle (617)666-6648.

BIVERSITY is the
Boston-area,
mixed-gender,
multicultural
bisexual network.
For more info call
the Bi Office at
(617) 338-9595.

February 14 ♦ Tuesday

National Bi Visibility Day!

February 14 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See February 1.

February 15 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting 7 -9:30pm.
Open to all bisexuals interested in the operations of the
Bisexual Resource Center.

February 16 ♦ Thursday

"Vocals Primer" Workshop by Havurat Shalom, a feminist, egalitarian Jewish community of gay, straight and bisexual women and men. Vocal tips and strategies for anyone afraid of singing when other people can hear you - from bathtub to bimah.

February 17 ♦ Friday

Bi Slumber Party. 8:00pm. Bring your sleeping bag and munchies. Sugar cereals will be provided. Call Karen at (508)625-6915 to RSVP and get directions.

February 18 ♦ Saturday

4 Big Girls, an African American Lesbian comedy group specializing in performance that dispels myths about women-of-size. Fine Arts Center, UMass/Amherst. Info: (413) 545-2511 or (413) 545-4824.

CALENDAR continues on page 15

NON-MONOGAMY/ POLYAMORY

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF NON- MONOGAMY

BY CECILIA TAN

I am an active non-monogamist. Both as a bisexual and as a member of the SM community, I find I'm just not happy if my erotic and emotional options are limited to just one person. I think I am not alone in this, but it has taken me years of fine-tuning to figure out the best ways of working out how both partners can get their needs met. My current primary relationship has now been going strong three and a half years with no sign of wearing thin, so I seem to have hit on a formula that works for both me and my partner. Rather than blather on about the actual details of our relationship which might or might not be illuminating, I thought it might be more helpful if I offered up some of the critical tools and ideas that I needed to get to this point.

This first thing is to decide that non-monogamy (or polyamory) is okay. There is a problem with non-monogamy and it is this. Even after we have come out as bisexual, even after we have accepted the fact that we don't necessarily fit into the neat categories of gender and sexuality that mainstream society has drawn for us as individuals, it may still seem wrong to have multiple partners. Let's face it, it's hard to fly in the face of what every story book moral says—"and they lived happily ever after" means the hero and the princess were loyal, committed, virtuous, and good to one another forever. So here's what you need to hear: not being monogamous does not mean you are not committed, not loyal, or not good. Cheating on your partner is wrong. Developing a relationship that allows you both to love others, is not. Listening to one another's needs and working out boundaries that you are both

comfortable with demonstrates and builds a kind of commitment to one another that "blind" monogamy doesn't. I like to think of it in this way—by going out and having outside relationships and garnering new experiences, I grow more as a person and I am enriched. I bring back what I have learned to my primary partner and it enriches our relationship and gives us even more upon which to build a partnership.

The second thing to realize is that this a bisexual's issue in particular for the fairly straightforward reason that if one is attracted to both men and women, then multiple partners may be the only way to get ones needs met. Even if you and your current partner are happily monogamous, if it doesn't last, and you remain in the bi community, polyamory is an issue you will certainly have to deal with at some point.

NUTS & BOLTS continues on page 4

BBWN Looks Ahead

Update on the recent BBWN Planning Meeting

by Carla Imperial

On Tuesday, March 7, BBWN held a planning meeting at the Bi office for all members. Nine women attended, bringing a range of BBWN experience and a plethora of ideas. The meeting was overall inspiring and energetic, and it was evident by the end of the meeting that all attendees see a strong future in BBWN and are willing to help mold its future into more exciting possibilities.

We started the meeting by going around the room and sharing what we think are present valuable aspects of the organization. Most people agreed that the current social offerings

Meeting continues on page 3

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Volunteers of the Month



Linda Blair
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Amy
Robyn Ochs
Carla Imperial
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Schwenk
Claire M.
Laura Sachs
Kathleen
Hepburn
Kathrine Douthit
Rosalie
Ellyn
Deborah
Vic
K.B.S.
Megan
Ann Goglia
Ellen
(and more --
thanks!)

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this issue of BiWomen:

Kathleen Hepburn
Linda Blair
Debbie Block-Schwenk
Stephanie Berger

Northeast Bisexual Community BiNET Meeting

Northeast Bisexual Community BiNET Meeting will be held Saturday, May 6th from 12 noon to 5:00pm at the Putney Friends Meeting House in Putney, Vermont.

Our second annual meeting will focus on Empowerment and Outreach to Rural Bisexuals as well as catching up on regional and local news. The aim of the regional community meeting is to share resources, support and network within our states and regions in order to break down our individual and collective isolation as bisexuals. This meeting will also serve to teach and learn from each other in order to organize in our local communities. After the meeting there will be social time to hang out and have dinner.

The purpose of BiNET, the National Bisexual Network, which formed under a different name in 1990, is threefold: 1) to collect and distribute information regarding Bisexuality and to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility; 2) to work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and 3) to work to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community.

Directions: Take Exit 4 from I-91. Follow Rt. 5 north to the center of Putney. The Putney Friends Meeting House is approximately three miles from I-91. The driveway to the Meeting House is the first left after Basketville (on your right). The driveway sign on Rt. 5 is for the Putney Day Care Center next door to the Meeting House. Please park on the Meeting House side of parking lot. The Meeting House is wheelchair accessible. If you need information on carpooling or public transport, or require ASL or childcare, please call either Stephanie or Kirsten.

A small donation will be requested but not required. This meeting is sponsored by The National Bisexual Network (BiNET USA). For more information call the Northeast BiNET regional representatives: Stephanie Berger (617) 666-3149 or e-mail virago@world.std.com or Kirsten Isgro (802) 658-9554.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in BiWomen

The theme for the June/July issue:

Diversity

How is it achieved? What are the obstacles? What are the benefits?

Probable future themes:

Humor Networking Men

DEADLINE for the June/July issue:

Friday, May 12, 1995

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

A shameless plug for the BiWomen Newsletter Stuff

It's *the* place to be in Boston!

For those of you in the Boston area (who have had little or not contact with BBWN), as a person who has just recently moved to Boston and gotten connected, I have a piece of advice: GO TO THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER STUFFING!!

Why?

- To get your newsletter early
 - For those of us who are shy, there's no need to talk, only action
 - It's easy to meet people
 - Because!
- I'll see you there!

- Deborah Levine

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this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

BBWN looks ahead, from page 1

are invaluable, e.g., monthly brunches at different women's homes, monthly get-togethers for the newsletter, and other opportunities to be around other bi-women. The newsletter is also something that's a definite strength of BBWN, offering a central place to share ideas, issues, and up and coming events. At the same time, we all recognize that BBWN has the potential to offer more to the bi-women's community, as long as we're all willing to put in the effort.

The meeting then turned into a brainstorming session. The ideas ranged in content, but overall, the following is a summary of what we'd like to see more of in BBWN:

- a more varied offering of social events
- a more politically active organization
- platforms for bi-women to rap about issues, separate from coming-out groups, including discussion groups, workshops, guest speakers, theme panels, etc.
- a specific, facilitated coming-out support group for bi-women.

From these main themes, we came up with specific ideas. We decided to put together a survey with these ideas listed, to find out what interests are out there. **THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN!!!** Enclosed in this issue of BiWomen, is the survey insert. PLEASE take a few moments to fill it out and send it back to us. Once we receive responses, we'll have a better idea of what people are looking for in BBWN.

But hark, we needn't wait for responses to get rollin'! Given that several facilitating-types were in the crowd, we were able to pick from several of the ideas mentioned and put them into motion. Most everyone who attended offered a commitment to actually plan and/or facilitate some of the activities.

Below, is a list of future events that you can look forward to, as the wheels of motion are turning this very second!

- Workshops:
 - Women's Sensuality
 - Lesbian/Bisexual dialogue
- Spring Hiking day
- Bi Women's Dance at Ryles - every 2nd Sunday of each month
- The posting of Bi events in the other mainstream queer publications (Bay Windows, etc.)
- 6-week facilitated coming out sessions
- Movie brunch
- Phone list of BBWN members (see survey)
- Another planning meeting to continue this great work, **May 10th, from 7-9 at the Bi Office.**

GET READY FOR AN EXCITING YEAR WITH BBWN, and thanks ahead of time for your feedback!

CALL FOR WORKSHOPS, PAPERS, PRESENTATIONS, PANELS, and PERFORMANCES

The 6th Northeast Regional Conference on Bisexuality...

...will be held at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts over the weekend of May 19-21. The preliminary list of events includes speakers, workshops, entertainers, an erotic story telling, a dance/party, videos and more. Registration forms will be e-mailed on Monday and will include pricing information. Call the Bisexual Resource Center and leave your name and address to have a registration form sent to you. Work exchange will be available.

This conference is sponsored by: the Bisexual Resource Center, Biversity Boston, the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, and NUBiLAGA (the Bi, Lesbian, and Gay student group at Northeastern). The conference is open to all bisexual and bi-friendly people.

If you are interested in leading a workshop, delivering a paper, making a presentation, moderating a panel, or performing at this conference, please fill out the form below and (snail) mail it to: Conference, c/o Bisexual Resource Center, 95 Berkeley St. Suite 613, Boston, MA 02116 USA

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Code: _____

Country: _____ e-mail address: _____

Description of workshop, etc. _____

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Informed Women Get Better Health Care

Women's Health America, Inc., dedicated to educating women about their health, announces the premiere issue of Women's Health America Infolog: the Complete Women's Health Resource Directory. The directory will include resources, book review summaries, info on women's health care products and more. First issue free. To order or for more info call 1-800-858-3980, or write Women's Health America, P.O. Box 9690, Madison, WI 53719.

NUTS & BOLTS, from page 1

The third thing to realize is that polyamory comes in many forms and that you may have to experiment to find the balance that works best for you and your partner. Consider these options:

Monogamy

Monogamy is an acceptable choice for a relationship! Monogamy is not merely the monolithic dinosaur of mainstream marriage—it has deep roots of commitment when both partners feel their bond is strengthened by sacrificing outside erotic interests for each other's sake. Don't knock it just because it's what married hets supposedly do. Just don't accept it blindly as the only option.

Single-sex polyamory

You and your partner may decide that it is alright to seek outside relationships with people of one sex but not the other. For one example,

Joseph and Mary are bi. Mary is allowed to have other women lovers, Joe, male lovers, but she is the only woman for him, he is the only man for her.

Veto Polyamory

Each partner is allowed to seek out other relationships, but they must each seek each other's approval prior to doing anything. That way they can "veto" each other's choices beforehand.

Poly-except-for-X

There may be specific erotic activities you reserve only for each other, such as kissing on the lips, or penetration.


Multiple Monogamy

When there are three or more of you in a mutual relationship, and you agree not to have relations outside of the group, but you can "mix and match" within the group.

Two-On-One

The two of you can have sex with a third party if all three of you are present.

Obviously, many of these can be combined to suit you, and there are even more ways to slice it. It all depends upon your priorities and the limits you feel comfortable with. You must also consider the difference between being allowed to have sex with outside partners and being allowed to have Relationships with outside partners. A partner who doesn't feel threatened by you sleeping around may be completely opposed to you having deep emotional connections to someone else. Another partner may not mind you spending a lot of time with someone else, supporting them emotionally, and even interacting with them erotically, just as long as you don't "go all the way."

The key is in having open discussion about what is and is not acceptable, not waiting to "see how it works out." Talk these things over with your partner(s), show them this article and see how they feel. You may find, too, that as each of you meet new people or others do get involved with you, that you may have a different comfort level at different times. Accept that people change, and that trying to always live by monolithic rules set in stone can lead to misery. You might have thought you wouldn't mind if your partner slept with someone else... but then when it turns out to be one of your own ex-lovers you find you can't stand the idea. We should all be adult enough to admit when we were wrong, and not to "call on" one another "But you Promised!" The dialogue must remain open. You may have to reevaluate your standards for polyamory on a case by case basis. I wish I could say there was just one simple answer, but there isn't. Every relationship is different. After all, if they weren't, we would only ever have but one! 

MOMS' NIGHT OUT

Bi/L Mothers social group forming. Events to include rotating in-home dinners, wine tastings, dining out, children's day too.

Singles welcome. Metrowest area, car necessary.

Please contact Peggy (508) 460-2577

Way Out in Waltham

BIF seeking non-smoker to share 2 bedroom house with myself and 9-year-old German Shepherd. Wooded lot, quiet street, private yard, off-street parking, washer & dryer. \$325 + 1/2 bills. Available immediately. Call Kim (617) 899-7093.

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THE MONOLOGUE CONTINUES

BY KATHRINE DOUTHIT

Well—I've given up! I guess I'll leave the vain struggles—which essentially replace actual living and actions—up to you younger women, who have the energy to convince others that non-monogamy can be a respectable institution based on love and sharing. I'm exhausted, really. The walks down nerve-wrackingly dim streets with a hundred niches to long meetings, where I'll sit, nibbling off each thumbnail, debating whether or not I should mention my partner's name, or that I **have** a partner. And if luck should have it, and the topic of non-monogamy comes up—my cheeks burning and my eyes bright—I'll finally cheer the topic on! When the reaction of the circle is one of shock and the occasional giddy question, "Would you want your woman friend to be with your male partner too?" or my favorite, "At the same time!?" It's then that I leave the room for a second to check the index card nailed to the door: "Bi-Group." Thank God! I thought for a second I had gone into the vegetarian-cooking group! Fortunately, there's always another woman (maybe two or three) who defend my weak nod to those questions ("Well, if possible," I suggest, to demonstrate my desire to be flexible and realistic.") with political zeal, and I'm redeemed somewhat, and certainly relieved! I construct my argument while I trim off another nail or twist a curl into one side of my hair, and I try to explain why I want to have a woman in my life—as a second partner.

But this takes energy. In my writhing attempts to explain myself, the romantic reasons for my search for the "right" woman turn to dry political defense of a 'right' that may seem too 'liberal' or 'kinky' to some. There are reasons concerning dignity and personal integrity that one wants to explain such a relationship through legal rights and freedom, citing, somewhat unwillingly, the 700 wives of Solomon, or Jacob marrying both Rachel **and** Leah. But those stories lead to the depressing facts surrounding wife-ownership—a problem which still plagues current monogamous relationships of all kinds.

If I stare off at some other corner of the room, or maybe while I'm maneuvering the split and buckled sidewalks on my way in the dark, I imagine myself making breakfast for 3—not counting the dog—and hanging a third stocking on the fireplace at Christmas, if she celebrates Christmas. I buy latte bowls in harmonious groups of 3, and I even find myself imagining the tender consideration of her personal space. Her need for attention. For time alone with me. Or with him. The arguments, the making-up. The trips, the nicknames. I'm good at conjuring up these images, since they are the joys that have decorated my current relationship for 9 years. But somehow being at her sickbed, both of us to tell her



corny stories, or when her day at work was horrible, letting her grouch and cry to either of us—these images are muddled out by desperate exhausting commentaries. I'm exclaiming, "Most **animals** are non-monogamous! It's the natural way!" or, expounding, "Do we have to use the negative 'non-?' I prefer 'polyfidelity'!"

Or there's the old quicksand trap. Me: "I'm talking about a responsible sexual and emotional relationship—being faithful to two people at once."

Someone with raised brows: "Are you bashing casual sex?"

Me: "Well...no..."

Her: "So, you're for casual sex?"

Me: "I hadn't given it much..."

I may be thinking, quietly to myself, 'it's worth another set of lovers' tensions and quarrels if the love is as sweet as ours has been so far.' But I prepare for the riposte, "It's **honest** non-monogamy! Half the world's doing it in secret through affairs!" 'Touché, kid, that's the way to do it!'

Oh, those dry debates are weary-making. They take time out from my painting, and time away from long poetic daydreams, those perfect pink triangles on some pine-fringed hiking trail of summer. Those expositions in support of my eccentric perversion don't leave any time for the long, shy getting-to-know-you conversations with new friends, which, God knows, can be tiring enough. Courage, sister bi women! I hope you'll take over my role if you're so inclined. Hold fast to your hopes and beliefs, to your freedom, and to your daydreams.

Bisexual fruit flies give clues about brain and sex

WASHINGTON - Bisexual fruit flies seem attracted to males and females with equal gusto, but scientists are still not quite sure if the genetically altered insects can even distinguish between the two sexes.

"We don't know if they can't tell the difference between males and females or if they are equally attracted to both," New York University neurogeneticist Ralph Greenspan said Thursday.

Normally, male fruit flies court females and each sex has a very specific role in courtship and mating.

Greenspan and a research team created a bisexual fruit fly by triggering a female gene in the brains of male fruit flies. This "feminized" parts of the brains, including sections that analyze odors that send sexual signals.

The team's work, aimed at better understanding the biological basis of sexual orientation and behavior, was published in a recent edition of the journal *Science*.

- By Joanne Kenen, Reuters News Service

NINA CARROLL, M.D.
OBSTETRICIAN / GYNECOLOGIST

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POLY MOVIES

(a list from the USENET newsgroup Alt.polyamory)

"Another Woman's Lipstick" (Denise Crosby) - Three episodes based on "Red Shoe Diaries", first episode concerns a woman who has two different lovers, who satisfy different needs. More dishonest monogamy than polyamory.

"Belle Epoque" (Ariadna Gil) - Spanish film set during the Spanish Civil War. An artist takes in a deserter, who repays him by sleeping with all four of his daughters. It's pretty light hearted and a warm farcical romp.

"Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice" (Robert Culp, Angie Dickinson) - This is very much a wife-swapping tale, rather than being more generally oriented. Widely known and raises many poly questions.

"A Change of Seasons" (Shirley Maclaine, Bo Derek) - Maclaine's professor husband has an affair with Derek; she then has an affair of her own, and then the four decide to go on a holiday together to see whether they can work something out...

"Enemies: A Love Story" (Angelica Houston, Ron Silver) - A tale of a man and the three women in his life.

"The Harrad Experiment" (James Whitmore, Tippi Hedron, Don Johnson) - Adaptation of the Robert Rimmer book. Unfortunately it spends so much time on the topic of public nudity that it has little left over to deal with poly issues.

"Harrad Summer"

"Heartbeat" (Nick Nolte) - This is the story of "beat" reporter Jack Kerouac's affair with a married couple.

"Henry and June" (Uma Thurman, Fred Ward) - Writer Henry Miller has an affair with his friend Anais Nin... and then his wife June shows up. Anais finds herself becoming attracted to June....

"The Hunger" (Catherine Deneuve, David Bowie, Susan Sarandon) - More bi than poly, and only a few moments of that. At the end Sarandon's character seems to have new lovers of both genders.

▼ (continues on next page) ▼

THE PLIGHT OF THE SINGLE POLY BISEXUAL FEMALE

BY SHARLA CLOS

Okay, let's get this straight, I might be a safer sex slut, but uh, I'm not a Swinger — or am I? Are Swinger's poly, or aren't they? How does one define Poly? Has poly become the term used for any open relationship? or is Poly different?

A close acquaintance defined poly in what I thought to be an appropriate way, people who are into more than one partner but who carry emotional and physical feelings for their lovers — not just out for a one time, good time experience which unfortunately is what I find a lot of people who label themselves Swingers are after, especially with a ...

...Single Bisexual Poly Female.

LIFESTYLES - PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

Now that I have been a married bisexual woman (monogamous), committed bisexual woman (non-monogamous/poly) and a single bisexual poly female — I'm finding it quite interesting. Actually I think the ultimate definition of poly would be to have a household which I actually do live in where all partners are interactive regardless of their outside interest...which is somewhat the situation I'm living in, though more often involved with one of the housemates than the other. I also feel that poly doesn't have to be identified by gender whether mixed-gender or same-gender or even sexual activity to some degree, the gender or sexual activity should not be an issue in defining oneself as poly.

EXPERIENCE

Recently I posted an ad on alt.poly.personals looking for people in the area with similar interest and I am overwhelmed with the response, especially for the South... I did receive most responses from couples though one male for New Hampshire answered my ad as well, but his response was written well enough that I knew he was sincere in his response and as a poly identified male who would be visiting this area was looking for folks to connect with. In all cases the women in the couples were bisexual and a few cases the men were as well.

BENEFITS

I have found that being a poly bisexual identified woman has opened a lot of doors to meeting a variety of people and the ability to locate other opened minded people in the South. Of course I also run into the close minded people who believe in monogamy or those who are willing to be monogamous while they allow you your freedom, which I have found in the past doesn't work very well for me so I avoid the situation as much as possible.

DIFFICULTIES

One of the most difficult areas of poly relationships for me is the time management and jealousy, not so much jealousy of other lovers but of lovers, especially primary/committed lovers spending enough time together and working out the schedule for other interests, an issue usually resolved when all partners are involved together. But for the Single Poly Bisexual Female it can even be a chore if you really care for and want to see more than one person at a time and are trying to carry a work or school schedule at the same time. And there are those activities that we all go to where if you are involved in a community you will no doubt both be faced with having more than one lover at the same location, therefore the need for your lovers to be at least civil if not friends (personally I find friends/lovers works best) but if there is past issues involved, sometimes it isn't always the case.

In addition to the emotional issues of being involved in poly relationships, the most important issue of course is trust and safety... considering the risk these days it is of the utmost importance to be totally open and honest with all your lovers and to make aware any risky activity that takes place on purpose or accidentally with other lovers.... I don't know how to manage this aspect or bring it to the forefront sometimes in conversations very appropriately so I manage to fumble my way through it...but it is a conversation we all must have with all of our lovers if we are going to survive.

I'd have to say that with regards to being a poly person, right now is one of the best times of my life, I'm free and able to sample the variety of poly situations in life, not necessarily sexually, but to see how a variety of people who label themselves poly actually live in their households, etc. I was able to attend Family Tree meetings (a poly support group out of the Boston area) shortly before leaving Boston for Texas and found it to be an interesting experience, it was nice to have a place to talk where everyone was on the same wave length most of the time. I also feel that I am quite lucky to live with two wonderful housemates in a family setting yet still have the ability to be single.

Poly relationships are only poly and open when all individuals in the relationship realize it is open, I have a very difficult time with folks who cheat on their lovers without their knowledge and label themselves poly..... or in a "open" relationship. I guess one could define that behavior to be non-monogamous but it isn't very fair to the others involved. So I hope that people are open and honest when they are identifying themselves as Poly which will help to keep the identity in a good light within our community. ▼



PLURAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

BY BRENDA BE

Since my very first sexual relationship, I have always had trouble restraining myself to one person. Faced with considerable social pressure, I became very much involved with one person. However, my resentment for this way of life became confused into a resentment for the person I was dating, and found an outlet through repeated periods of separation from him. My desire for more than one person also found an outlet in occasional sexual experiences with other people, even when I was monogamously dating this one person. Although I had no desire to hurt my boyfriend, I still could not confine myself only to him. This situation was labelled by others to be an extremely selfish and unfeeling attitude on my part. This reaction by others, including my boyfriend, caused me to feel a lot of guilt.

At the time of this writing, I am again in a similar situation. I am in a very serious love relationship with one man, and we live together. Although I care for him very deeply, I do not feel that he is "enough" for me. I have some emotional and sexual needs that he simply cannot or will not meet. I feel that he is a wonderful person, but I do not feel that we are compatible in all aspects of our selves. At the same time, I have a (currently platonic) relationship with another person which is very special to me. I would like to include sex as one aspect of this relationship because I am attracted to this person and because I feel it would enhance our relationship. This situation is further complicated by the fact that this friend is also involved in a love relationship with another person.

Undeniably, many people are attracted to more than one person. Everyone knows of situations in which two people who love each other very much continually break up because one of them is also very much attracted to one or more other persons. Yet these two people also continually reinstate their relationship ("get back together"), showing that they surely care about each other very much. These repeated separations are unnecessarily foisted upon such a couple by a society that says one cannot have a serious relationship with more than one person. If I conform to this type of thinking, then all my lovers will be consigned to suffer from my repeated seeming "rejections" of them simply because I also strongly desire a sexual relationship with another.

Some say, if you are non-monogamous, you haven't met your "true love." To them I say it is difficult to reply to this type of objection because I am not on my deathbed, looking back at a finished life. Of course I shall meet many more people in my lifetime. I shall probably love

some of them more than my current boyfriend. But does that of necessity mean that one of them is destined to be an ultimate love? I think not. This type of response can be made almost anytime someone is dissatisfied with something. If I felt that my current relationship was not the "ultimate love," then surely I should keep searching, not waiting. But in searching, I would need to stay with each person for a long time, for fear of not giving them a good enough chance. But by keeping completely monogamous to that person while giving him a chance, am I not wasting good "searching time?" If there is an ultimate love out there for me somewhere, with whom I will be utterly satisfied, then I want to find that person as soon as possible! I don't want to waste one moment of our "precious, blissful, time together!"

The idea that there is only one ultimate love out there for me is a sad one. What if that person is on the other side of the world? What if he/she only speaks Sanskrit? What if he/she just died in a car accident last week? In such a case I could tell myself, at the end of a long and fruitful life, how utterly sad it was that I had never met my ultimate love, and thus be needlessly depressed. I could also tell myself that anytime I strongly desire someone other than the person I am seriously dating, I must not have found my "ultimate love." This attitude would cause me to not enjoy the relationship I am in as fully as I could, and could also cause needless depression and anxiety about the necessity of finding that ultimate love.

If there is more than one person out there who could conceivably be my ultimate love, then it is also conceivable that I might find more than one of them. In this case, I should have to choose (by the law of monogamy) one of them, thus depriving myself of the pleasure of two ultimate loves. Furthermore, since we would be each other's ultimate love, what of the person I did not choose? Perhaps that person would not ever find another ultimate love.

Sex is an important aspect of a relationship between two people. The addition of sex whether as an occasional interlude or a single episode, can deepen an existing friendship and draw two people closer together. I already have a close relationship with my friend, which I greatly enjoy. But I am certain that sex with this person would enhance this relationship, add another nuance to it. I am interested in improving my relationships as much as possible, and in making the relationships as enjoyable as is possible for both parties.

I am *not* saying that sex is necessary for a fruitful relationship; I am saying that it can cause a relationship to be *even more* fruitful. The idea that a relationship is "good enough" is contrary to the idea of continued evolution. I do not be-

PLURAL continues on next page

▼ (from preceding page) ▼

"A Lesson in Love" (1954) (Ingmar Bergman) - A romantic comedy about a doctor trying to win back his wife after she leaves him over an affair of his.

"Lianna" (John Sayles) - A professor's wife finds out he's having an affair, and at the same time falls in love with a female professor. More a lesbian tale than a poly one, but especially good at showing the effects on family and friends of "coming out" different.

"Loving Couples"

"Loving Molly" (Beau Bridges, Sally Fields) - The story of three men and the one woman that they share from the time they are children and throughout their lives.

"Lucky Lady" (Liza Minelli, Gene Hackman, Burt Reynolds) - It does look like the three main characters are getting set to stay together at the end of the movie.

"Mahabharata"

Contains the marriage of five brothers, the Pandava, to a single wife, Draupadi, based (I believe) on aspects of mythology from India.

"Mickey and Maude"

"No Way Out" (Kevin Costner, Sean Young, Gene Hackman) - Costner gets involved with Young, who is already involved with his boss (Hackman). Bad things happen. She actively says that she is poly (before she is killed).

"Paint Your Wagon" (Lee Marvin, Jane Fonda, Clint Eastwood) - Due to the scarcity of women, Marvin and Eastwood share one.

"Red Shoe Diaries" Man finds out about girlfriends poly lifestyle after she kills herself. Then he meets her other lover.

"Rita and Sue ... and Bob too" A married man's affair with two younger women causes his wife to leave him. Can the three lovers transmute their sexual interest into something more lasting?

"Same Time Next Year" (Alan Alda) - Alda has a once a year meeting with his lover (as opposed to his wife), most of the time is spent examining the changes in the two people in the intervening times.

"The Seduction of Joe Tynan" (Alan Alda) - Alda plays a politician who falls in love with another woman at a convention.

▼ (continues on next page) ▼

POLY MOVIES

▼ (from preceding page) ▼

"She's Gotta Have It" One of Spike Lee's earliest films, deals with a polyamorous young woman and the three men who want her to choose. There are also a lot of Afro-American male/female issues addressed in this movie.

"Small Circle of Friends" Genuine poly values are central to the plot of this film about a MFM triad. Low-budget production, but asks good questions.

"Summer Lovers" (Darryl Hannah) - A young American couple on a summer vacation in the Mediterranean get involved with a French archaeologist.

"3 of Hearts" (this has a different ending in the European release) (Kelly Lynch, Sherilyn Fenn, William Baldwin) - Lesbian Lynch loses partner Fenn, who is bi, she pays Baldwin to seduce Fenn and dump her, hoping that she will come back. In the European release the movie ends with Baldwin getting the girl, in the American release he doesn't.

"Threesome" (Laura Flynn Boyle, Steven Baldwin, Josh Charles) - The story of 2 men and 1 woman who find themselves assigned to the same dorm room, and the relationship that develops. Their multi-partner relationship is portrayed in a very poly-friendly way.

"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (Daniel Day-Lewis, Lena Olin) - The womanizing Tomas falls in love with the monogamous Tereza, but cannot give up his lover Sabina....Meanwhile, Russian tanks roll over Prague...

PLURAL, from preceding page

lieve that there is some ultimate perfection beyond which a relationship cannot go. Rather, I believe that relationships are continually growing and changing, and that the addition of sex is merely one more way for a relationship to grow. If two people are comfortable enough with themselves, with each other, and with their sexuality, they should be able to have a rewarding sexual experience which can enhance their friendship, regardless of whether they are of the same, or of the opposite, sex. Therefore, the relationship into which I desire to add sex could be either with a man or with a woman; that distinction is irrelevant.

It is when two people are not comfortable enough with each other or with their sexuality that sex destroys a relationship. At other times, when a relationship is destroyed seemingly because of sex, other factors are actually at work. Other factors, such as a previous incompatibility, lack of patience on the part of one or both parties (for instance, if the initial sexual experience was not "pleasurable enough"), or indifference on the part of one or both parties, would have eventually destroyed the relationship anyway. I know that none of these factors are present in my (currently platonic) relationship with my friend.

Pleasure is definitely one of the reasons I do desire it. Is there something inherently wrong in that desire? To reply yes would imply a Puritan ethic which would mean that even sex in marriage, when practiced for pleasure and not procreation, is wrong. Can I receive this pleasure from one lover and be monogamous? I reply that this is not always possible. At times I am travelling, away from my lover, and desire sex with another person. Finally, my lover has a completely different biological clock and work schedule than I do. Often the only time I see him is when he is asleep, and refuses to wake up. I cannot schedule my sexual desires.

THE NEXT STEP: Issues I would address in future essays would be the ethical superiority of sharing (anything), from which follows the ethical superiority of sharing people; the problems of jealousy and guilt which stem from monogamy

(and not sharing); and societies which did not practice monogamy yet were successful.

TO THE READER: How many times (if ever) have you been *seriously* tempted to have sex with a person other than the one whom you were seriously dating? Have you ever followed through on these temptations? What were the results for your relationship with all concerned parties (including yourself)? Do you think many of these results were the cause of the situation itself, or of society's (and the particular people involved's) attitudes toward such a situation? ▼

POLY NON-FICTION

Here's a great list of books from the USENET (Internet) group Alt.polyamory

Key to symbols:

* indicates level of poly in piece

! indicates poly friendliness of piece

For you e-mail types out there: To get further information on books on this list, you can telnet the Library of Congress at dra.com or locis.loc.gov

- ***** !!!!! Deborah Anapol, "Love Without Limits" (see IRC listing under organizations)
- ***** !!!!! M. L. Carden, "Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation"
- ***** ! Audrey Chapman, "Mansharing: Dilemma or Choice"
- ***** !!!!! G. Clanton & C. Downing, "Face to Face to Face"
- ***** ! L. & J. Constantine, "Group Marriage"
- *** !!!!! Samuel R. Delany, "Heavenly Breakfast"
- *** !!!!! Samuel R. Delany, "The Motion of Light in Water"
- ** !!!!! Helen Fisher, "Anatomy of Love"
- * ! Amo Karlen, "Threesomes: Studies in Sex, Power, and Intimacy"
- ***** !!!!! Aidan A. Kelly (ed), "The New Polygamy: The Polyamorous Lifestyle as a New Spiritual Path."
- *** !!!!! R. Libby & R. Whitehurst, "Marriage and Alternatives: Exploring Intimate Relationships"
- *** !!!!! Spencer Klaw, "Without Sin"
- *** !!!!! R. Mazur, "The New Intimacy: Open Marriages and Alternative Lifestyles"
- ** ! Peter McWilliams, "Ain't Nobody's Business If You Do: The Absurdity of Consensual Crimes in a Free Society"
- ***** !!!!! Ryam Nearing, "Loving More: The Polyfidelity Primer" (see PEP listing under organizations)
- ** !!!!! Anais Nin, "The Diaries of Anais Nin"
- **** !!!!! Nena and George O'Neill, "Open Marriage"
- *** n/a "The Pillow Book" (erotic art from India, China, and Japan)
- *** !!!!! James Ramey, "Intimate Friendships"
- *** !!!!! Carl Rogers, "Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives"
- ** !!!!! Bertrand Russell, "Marriage and Morals"
- ***** !!!!! Gay Talese, "Thy Neighbor's Wife"
- *** !!!!! Robert Thamm, "Beyond Marriage and the Nuclear Family" ▼

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

2326B MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140
617.497.6581

A FAMILY OF THREE

BY LISA SHEEHY

Before me, peaceful. Behind me, peaceful. All around me, peaceful.

Dusk gathers in around the three of us, sitting shoulder to shoulder on the tent platform — Carol, Eric and me. We watch the colors subtly shifting along the layered slopes and valleys as daylight fades. Without conversation, we are nevertheless in communion. It's the last evening of our first vacation together and I am touched with joyful serenity as I share this moment with my two partners.

This deep joy is frequently, wonderfully, present in our relationship. I will confess that the serenity is much rarer, hard to maintain in the midst of our madcap juggle to keep the three of us moving in synch. I suspect that creating and nurturing a partnership between three people demands a sort of dynamic balance, like dancing, aikido, juggling. *In order to achieve harmony, one must embrace movement. This is possible only with growing trust, patient practice, communication and humor.* The three of us are learning this gradually — often we're clumsy, but we are getting better at it.

So much for the poetic—let me lay out some specifics. Eric and Carol and I have a "triangular" relationship in which each of us loves and is committed to the other two. We hope to be partners for life, to live together, raise kids together, share our futures. We're also all sexual partners and all bisexual. At this point, our relationship is semi-closed to other people: we've agreed that Carol and I won't have other lovers, while Eric could be lovers with other men. This arrangement may change over time, probably in the direction of more openness.

Our partnership is serious and deep, but admittedly young (although we ourselves are in our thirties) — we became a triad about a year ago. At that time, Carol and I had been dear friends for many years, and Eric and I had been partners for two. We became a triad after Eric and Carol met and became lovers (I told them they would like each other, although I didn't expect this outcome!) Over the following months, Carol and I evolved from beloved friends to lovers and all three of us grew to see ourselves as life-partners. We have not yet all lived together full time, although we spend nearly all of our weekends and holidays together. At present, Eric and I live in a household with other friends and Carol lives two hours drive away. What with careers and so on, we may not be able to move together for a couple of years. Since we're only in the early stages ourselves, it's with caution that I offer a few observations on three-person partnership. Nevertheless, some of our experiences may help others. We've found that there are few mentors or role models for triads and we've welcomed any bit of information.

Maybe a first question is *why* do I want a non-monogamous relationship? What's wrong with

monogamy? Nothing! I believe monogamy is a terrific choice for many people who best practice intimacy, love and trust in that way. My own choice has always been for relationships that are open to other people sexually and emotionally. While in practice I sometimes have spent long periods with only one partner, it has always been important for my personal feeling of integrity to retain the responsibility and right to decide with whom I am intimate. (In fact, my present agreement to be "fidelitous" with Carol and Eric is more monogamous than I have been before and is something of a compromise.) I like open relationship because I find that they focus me on what actually is important for me about a relationship, not on the distractions of maintaining a boundary between the relationship and the rest of the world, or the fear I'll lose my partner. For me, an open relationship focuses me on practicing scrupulous honesty and good communication, noticing and welcoming what I love to share with a partner, and really appreciating the ways s/he is different from me. I don't feel forced to be alike, because I know that I can share other aspects of my life and passions with others. Open relationship teaches me to trust love, my own and others', and to expect that sharing it will result in plenty, not in scarcity. Loving two (or more) people need not mean loving each one less.

I've been in different forms of non-monogamous relationship and I like my triad with Eric and Carol much the best. Over the years, I've had good relationships, including one for 13 years, in which I and my partner(s) have had other partners. Generally, we've all been friends. But this partnership with Carol and Eric is my first in which all three of us consider ourselves life-partners and in which all three of us are lovers sexually. This feels more intimate, harmonious and stable. One lesson I've learned is that really, we share four relationships, not one. Our three-person partnership is built on the base of our three two-person relationships (like a tripod or a pyramid). *The well-being of each of these relationships is vital to the health of the others.* We must be sure to tend to the dynamics of each of the pair relationships as well as to our triad. The relationship between Carol and Eric concerns me as much as my own with them. It benefits all of us for me to support and cherish their relationship. For me, this is the real answer to the question of jealousy. *We are able to be close as a triad only when each pair of us is in harmony.*

This has some pragmatic implications. We have to be sure that each pair of us, as well as the three of us, has meaningful time together. Sometimes one pair needs more time than another. This means we have to remain sensitive to what we need, talk about it honestly and let it change flexibly. Conflict can be painful in a new way. It's more painful for me when Eric and Carol are angry or hurt with each other than when I'm directly involved, because I'm affected by their dynamics even though I can't change them.

At the same time, we must constantly work to

FAMILY continues on next page

POLY FICTION

Another great list from the *USENET* (Internet) group *Alt.polyamory* (see page 8 for key and info).

- * I Isabel Allende, "Eva Luna"
- *** II Thea Alexander, "2150 AD"
- ** II Wilhelmina Baird, "Crashcourse"
- ** III Wilhelmina Baird, "Clipjoint"
- *** III John Dudley Ball, "Chief Tallon and the S.O.R."
- *** III M. A. R. Barker, "Flamesong"
- *** III M. A. R. Barker, "Man of Gold"
- **** IIII Gael Baudino, "Gossamer Axe"
- **** IIII Amy Bloom, "Love is Not a Pie", short story
- *** IIII Marion Zimmer Bradley, "The Forbidden Tower"
- ** II Rita Mae Brown, "Six of One"
- ** II Orson Scott Card, "Saints"
- ** III Ernest Callenbach, "Ecotopia"
- ** III Ernest Callenbach, "Ecotopia Emerging"
- ** II Robertson Davies, "Fifth Business"
- ** II Robertson Davies, "Leaven of Malice"
- ** II Robertson Davies, "Lyre of Orpheus"
- ** II Robertson Davies, "World of Wonders"
- ** IIII Samuel R. Delany, "Babel-17"
- * IIII Samuel R. Delany, "Dhalgren"
- *** IIII Samuel R. Delany, "The Mad Man"
- ** IIII Samuel R. Delany, "Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand"
- ** IIII Samuel R. Delany, "Triton"
- ** III Wayne Dyer, "Gifts From Eykis"
- *** III Goethe, "Wahlverwandschaften"
- *** III Robert Graves, "Goodbye to All That"
- *** III Robert Graves, "Watch the North Wind Rise"
- * II Andrew Harvey, "Burning Houses"
- ** IIII Robert Heinlein, "Beyond This Horizon"
- ** IIII Robert Heinlein, "The Cat Who Walked Through Walls"
- ** IIII Robert Heinlein, "Friday"
- *** IIII Robert Heinlein, "Glory Road"
- ** IIII Robert Heinlein, "Gulf"

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POLY FICTION

▼ (from preceding page) ▼

- **** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "I Will Fear No Evil"
- *** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "Methuselah's Children"
- ** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress"
- *** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "The Number of the Beast"
- *** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "To Sail Beyond the Sunset"
- **** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "Stranger in a Strange Land"
- **** !!!!! Robert Heinlein, "Time Enough For Love"
- * !!! John Irving, "The World According to Garp"
- *** !! Mercedes Lackey & Ellen Guon, "Knight of Ghosts and Shadows"
- * !! Mercedes Lackey & Ellen Guon, "Summoned to Tournay"
- ** !!!!! Doris Lessing, "The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five"
- *** !! Elizabeth Lynn, "The Dancers of Arun"
- *** !! Elizabeth Lynn, "A Different Light"
- *** !! Elizabeth Lynn, "The Sardonyx Net"
- **** !!!!! Donald Kingsbury, "Courtship Rite" ("Geta" in the UK)
- **** ! Milan Kundera, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being"
- *** !!! Michael P. Kube-McDowell, "The Quiet Pools"
- **** !!!!! Larry McMurty, "Leaving Cheyenne"
- ** !!! Vonda McIntyre, "Starfarers"
- ** !!! Vonda McIntyre, "Transition"
- ** !!! Vonda McIntyre, "Metaphase"
- * !!!!! Shirley Meier, "Shadow's Daughter"
- * ! Vladimir Nabokov, "Ada"
- **** ! Maxine Paetro, "Manshare"
- * !!! David Palmer, "Emergence"
- **** !!!!! Marge Piercy, "The High Cost of Living"
- *** !! Marge Piercy, "Woman on the Edge of Time"
- *** !!! Marge Piercy, "Summer People"
- **** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "Come Live My Life"
- **** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "The Harrad Experiment"
- *** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "The Immoral Reverend"
- *** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "The Love Exchange"

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FAMILY, from preceding page

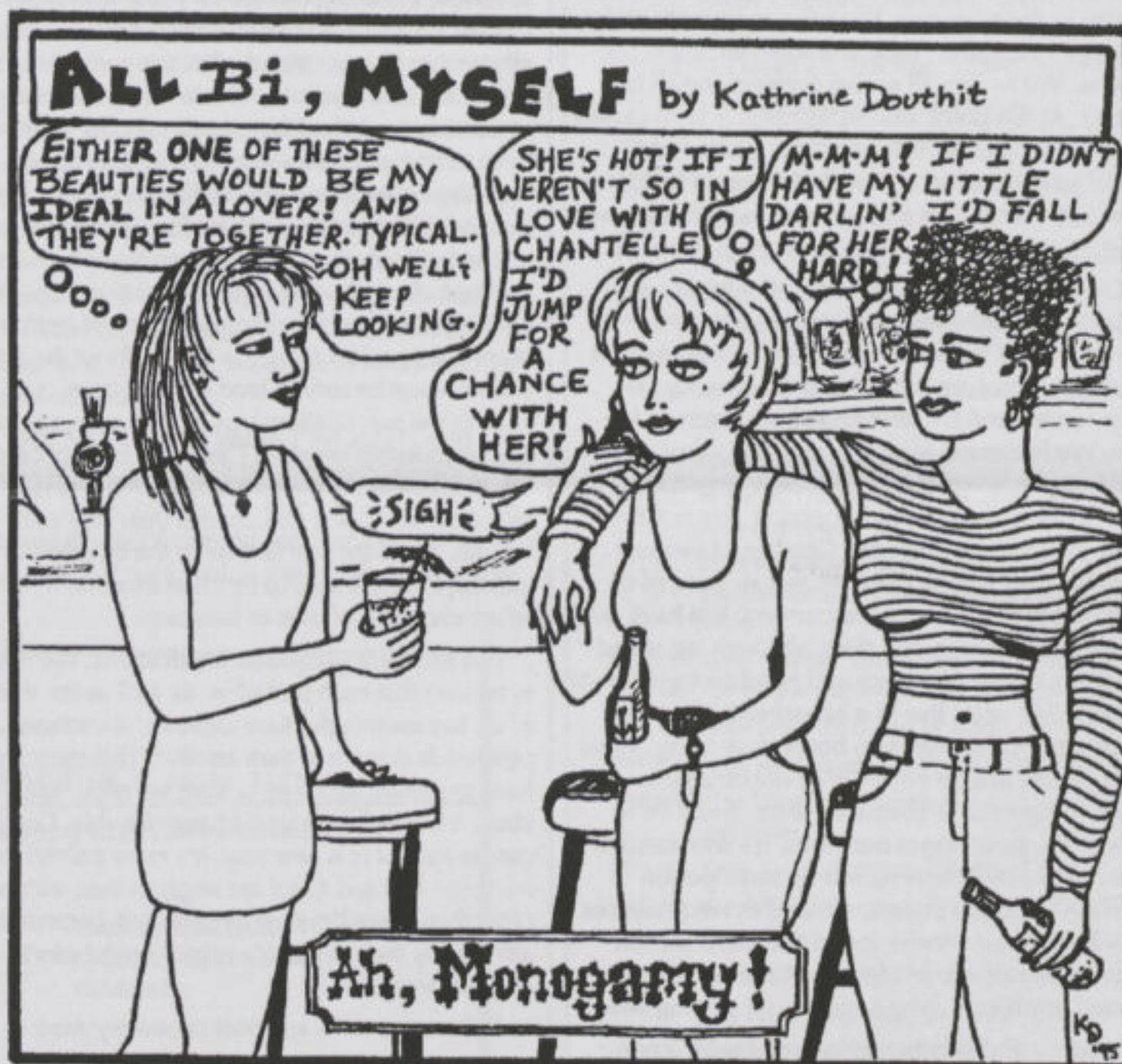
uphold our triad relationship as well as our pairs. A friend who has been in a triad for several years has warned us that "the world will constantly try to push you back into pairs. You have to fight to be a three." Indeed, the larger world doesn't offer much support for triads, although many of our friends have. We've come out about our partnership to some members of our families and to some of our co-workers. Some have been wonderful. We struggle with the reaction of others and wonder whether it's worth the hassle and pain of coming out. Some people are waiting for us to break up, as we "inevitably will." Others worry that we'll get hurt, a kind-hearted concern, but we suspect that that wouldn't have been their first reaction had we told them of a new two-person relationship. Some consistently "forget" to mention one partner. On the larger societal dimension, we know that we'll have to be inventive to create our own ceremonies and legal instruments for celebrating our commitment, parenting and raising our kids in a three-parent family, protecting our relationships in case of medical or other emergencies, and so on. (Even in the face of societal disapproval, I must say that I look forward to raising kids together and expect that we'll discover great benefits to parenting in threes.)

Let me come back to the issue of jealousy. Most people think that jealousy is the real danger in a non-monogamous relationship, but I haven't experi-

enced that. In fact, I don't think I feel jealous at all. Each of us does sometimes feel lonely when the other two are away, and Carol and I sometimes feel insecure about whether we're being left behind as the other pairs' relationship evolves. The insecurity is compounded by the fact that we still live at a distance, so Eric and I share daily life in a way that Carol doesn't yet. So far, we've survived our insecurity by acknowledging it, *accepting it without considering it a crisis*, and frequently reaffirming our importance to each other.

For me, the real monster of life as a triad is not jealousy, but scheduling! If you're going to live any kind of non-monogamous life, you've got to learn to love (well, tolerate) scheduling and coordination! Not only your leisure time, but the logistics of your careers, preferences about how and where to live, and so on. Exponentially harder with more partners. Time and logistics, not a scarcity of love or commitment, is what limits my ability to maintain deep relationships with others. Sounds mundane, but it's real!

And the greatest pleasure? The greatest pleasure for me is sharing my love, passion, admiration and respect for each of my partners with the other. It's being in love with Eric together with Carol, and being in love with Carol together with Eric. In the end, that's really why I'm with them—because I love loving them and I love their loving each other. That's what it takes to make a true family. ▼



THREE

BY BRENDA BE

There were three.

There was not polygamy

nor jealousy

nor merely menage á trois.

There was only the most natural logical

love relationship.

Not between them.

Among them.

The house had wood floors, large windows, and three bedrooms. The smallest room was Keeshan's. Keeshan and Emily were inside, half-sitting, half-lying on an Indian rug of purple and rose, which covered most of the floor. Keeshan was dumping wooden blocks out of a plastic truck into a pile in Emily's lap, from which Emily was constructing a building. Keeshan was speaking animatedly.

"When I get big I'm gonna build big houses. I'm gonna drive a truck an' a bulldozer an' make houses an' things. And I'm gonna make a big office like the one you work at!"

"That would be neat. You'd get to be outside all the time. And I could make your commercials, and you'd let me come and ride in your truck, right?"

"Yeah!"

In the kitchen, Alek was washing dishes. When he was done, he brewed tea from sassafras root, ginseng, and cinnamon. He carried the grey tin cup into the central room, and set it down on a granite table. He then reclined upon a long teal sofa, picked up October's *Magical Blend*, and began reading.

I found Amy in the largest bedroom. She was lying on an enormous waterbed, surrounded and covered by several quilts and comforters, and propped upon three fat pillows. She put down her book, *Pleasures*, and spoke to me.

"This is everyone's bedroom. We all sleep on this bed; we all make love on this bed. When someone wants to be alone, that person sleeps in the other bedroom, which has a fouton. At least, that's the idea. But if I feel like sleeping alone I make Alek and Emily sleep on the fouton, and I get the waterbed, because I can't stand the fouton! They don't mind too much. Of course, Keeshan sleeps in her own room. But sometimes she wants to be close to us, so she comes and jumps right in here! Then it's really cuddly. Like a burrow, an animal's burrow, that's what this bed is to us all.

"I do wonder about the future. I do fear. And as for the present, we do fight, disagree, like in any relationship. Yes, sometimes it's harder with three than with two. But I learn so much from Emily and Alek, and I hope they have learned from me. And I would miss them both so much if I didn't see them every day. There is so much love among all of us, including Keeshan. I think that she is very lucky to have this much love, around her, for her.

"Anyway, Keeshan is biologically my daughter. She calls me 'Mommy.' She calls Emily and Alek, 'Emily and Alek.' Alek is her biological father. But he doesn't like kids to call their parents 'Mommy and Daddy.' I like to be called 'Mommy.' Emily, well, she always said maybe it would be simpler just to call her 'Emily.' So, that's that. But we're all mothers here; we're all fathers. I'd say it's more like all mothers than fathers, the traditional idea of fathers anyway.

"We've told Keeshan that most families aren't like ours. And we're trying to explain that some people don't accept our type of family, even hate it. She goes to day care three days a week, so she is beginning to see the differences. I'm not worried about her too much. I have a lot of hopes for her; we all do. Yesterday she wanted to make music, like Alek does. Today she wants to drive bulldozers, Emily tells me. So you see, she is developing many aspects of her self, her many selves. I'm still working on that, too."



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▼ (from preceding page) ▼

- *** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "Premar Experiments"
- *** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "Proposition 31"
- *** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "The Rebellion of Yale Marrat"
- **** !!!!! Robert Rimmer, "Thursday My Love"
- ** !! Elizabeth Scarbrough, "The Harem of Aman Akbar"
- ** !!! Melissa Scott, "The Empress of Earth"
- ** !!! Melissa Scott, "The Five-Twelfths of Heaven"
- ** !!! Melissa Scott, "Silence in Solitude"
- *** !!!!! Starhawk, "The Fifth Sacred Thing"
- * !!!!! S. M. Stirling, "Snow Brother"
- **** !!!!! S. M. Stirling & Shirley Meier, "The Cage"
- * !!!!! S. M. Stirling & Shirley Meier, "Saber and Shadow"
- *** !!!!! S. M. Stirling, Shirley Meier, & Karen Wehrstein, "Shadow's Son"
- ** !!! John Varley, Gaia trilogy; "Demon", "Titan", "Wizard"
- ** !!! John Varley, "The Persistence of Vision"
- ** !!! Joan D. Vinge, "The Outcasts of Heaven's Gate"
- ** !!! Alice Walker, "The Temple of My Familiar"
- **** !!!!! Karen Wehrstein, "Lion's Heart"
- **** !!!!! Karen Wehrstein, "Lion's Soul"
- *** !!! James Wharram, "Two Girls, Two Catamarans"
- ** !!! Kate Wilhelm, "Where Late the Sweet Birds Sing"

10 WAYS TO FUCK UP A RELATIONSHIP

The following is a guide of carefully tested methods for making mistakes in polyamorous relationships. However, with proper application and ingenuity, these methods may impair or destroy monogamous relationships as well.

1. Lie. This is basic and effective. To maximize bad results, lie about something important to the other person(s) and arrange to be caught in the lie in such a way as to produce maximum shock. Additional points awarded for keeping the lie going for a while, thus increasing sense of betrayal upon discovery. Lying about sex gets double points. Lying about being married gets triple fuck-up points. Creative lies of omission (i.e. "not telling") with fancy rationalizations and condescension get gold stars.

2. Avoid self-knowledge. Our researchers found that self-destructive or addictive behavior are two highly effective methods of avoiding self-knowledge. When combined with an endearing attitude of helplessness, this strategy has been proven effective in attracting "rescuers" or "white knights" on whom one can then practice the following two strategies.

3. Disclaim responsibility. This often includes what is referred to as "codependency". The classic way to play this strategy is to cater to your partner(s) needs while repressing your own. This builds resentment and lets you justify your anger by rationalizing that you've done so much for your partner(s) and gotten no thanks for it, etc.

4. Blame the other person(s). If anything went wrong, hey, it must be their fault, right? This eliminates the need for messy things like communication and negotiation.

5. Push. This is an art, albeit a crude one. Pushing can achieve spectacular results in even a short time. When pushing, only your satisfaction counts! And remember, emotional and mental bullying can be as satisfying as old-fashioned physical coercion, and isn't nearly as easy to prosecute.

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The following is excerpted from the Frequently Asked Questions (also known as "FAQ") file posted on the electronic group list Alt.polyamory

THE ALT.POLYAMORY FAQ

WHAT'S ALT.POLYAMORY?

Alt.polyamory is a USENET newsgroup (on the Internet) more or less full of people interested in talking about polyamory and related topics.

WHAT'S POLYAMORY, THEN?

(Glad you asked that. ;-)) Polyamory means "loving more than one". This love may be sexual, emotional, spiritual, or any combination thereof, according to the desires and agreements of the individuals involved. "Polyamorous" is also used as a descriptive term by people who are open to more than one relationship even if they are not currently involved in more than one. (Heck, some are involved in less than one.) Some people think the definition is a bit loose, but it's got to be fairly roomy to fit the wide range of poly arrangements out there.

BUT ISN'T THAT 'CHEATING'?

Nope.

Oh, you wanted a longer answer. Okay. According to the OED, cheating means "fraud, deceit, swindling." What this boils down to with polyamory is that polyamorous people do not tell partners, lovers, or prospective members of those groups that they are monogamous when in fact they are not — nor do they allow these people to assume they are monogamous, regardless of how convenient or personally advantageous such assumptions might be. The words "honest", "negotiate", "communication" and "being out" occur frequently in discussions of how polyamory usually works.

PRIMARIES, SECONDARIES, VEES AND TRIADS: POLYJARGON AND POLYGEOMETRY...

Since there are lots of different ways to organize (or not organize, if one is blessed by the Goddess of Chaos, or has a taste for happy anarchy, or is a principled egalitarian) relationships, it follows that there are ways of describing these various arrangements. This polyjargon has evolved in the newsgroup over time, and the words are merely descriptives. No approval or disapproval of any particular arrangement is to be expressed or implied.

Primary: word often used in a hierarchal multi-person relationship to denote the person with whom one is most strongly bonded. In some cases this bond or commitment takes the form of legal marriage. As bigamy is not legal, the option

of having two (or more) legally wedded primaries simultaneously is not currently practicable, though non-legal ceremonies may certainly be performed. In some cases "primary" refers to the lover with the most seniority.

Secondary: follows from primary, in a hierarchal relationship, denotes a person with whom one is involved without the emotional, legal, or economic complexities and commitments of primary bonding.

Yes, some people talk about tertiaries and so on. Some people also don't like the terms primaries and secondaries or the concepts behind the terms, preferring to have "a circle of equals" as one poly person called it. Stef contributed the term "Non-hierarchical Polyamory" for this kind of arrangement.

Triad: three people involved in some way. Often used in a fairly committed sense, in some cases involving ceremonies of commitment, but also used simply to mean "three people who are connected". Example: "Jodine, Mischa and Mickey are a FMM triad living in Excelsior."

Vee: Three people, where the structure puts one person at the bottom, or "hinge" of the vee, also called the pivot point. In a vee, the arm partners are not as commonly close to each other as each is to the pivot.

Triangle (or equilateral triangle): relationship where three people are each involved with both of the others. Sometimes also called a triad.

Line Marriage: term from the works of Robert A. Heinlein, science fiction writer, meaning a marriage that from time to time adds younger members, eventually establishing an equilibrium population (spouses dying off at the same rate as new ones are added). This is a different form of familial immortality than the traditional one of successive generations of children. (Definition courtesy of M. Schafer, and yes, there are people who are in situations like this who use the term to describe their family.)

Polyfidelity: Relationship involving more than two people who have made a commitment to keep the sexual activity within the group and not have outside partners. (Rumor has it that this term was coined by the group Kerista.)

Quads, pentacles, sextets and more: There are polyfolk who exist in multiple arrangements with more than three members. Geometry can get complicated, and creative nomenclature abounds. As in every other aspect of polyamory, the precise bonds of intimacy vary from group to group and from member to member within groups.

WHAT ABOUT JEALOUSY?

Some people seem to have no jealousy; it's as if they didn't get that piece installed at the factory. Others, including some long-term polyamorists, feel jealousy, which they regard as

POLY FAQ, from preceding page

a signal that something needs investigation and care, much as they would regard depression or pain. Jealousy is neither a proof of love (and this is where polyamory differs from possessive or insecure monogamy) nor a moral failing (and this is where polyamory differs from emotionally manipulating one's partner(s) into relationships for which they are not ready).

ARE THERE RULES FOR BEING POLYAMOROUS?

Nobody has a trademark on How It's Done, if that's what you mean. The best anyone can do is tell how it works for them, and as with most other things, YMMV. (That means "Your Mileage May Vary.")

Some people have "rules of thumb".

Elf and Omaha:

"I will play safe. I will come home."

Joe and Kat:

"Your needs come first. We'll talk about everything. What they said."

Elise:

"Since a certain 'learning experience' I have felt strongly that I should never allow my relationship with a new person to be a tool used to avoid dealing with a 'broken' other relationship. In fact, one of the things I am most careful about is 'emotional spillover'; I have a policy of not spending intense time with otherloves when there is something out of balance with one love. Naturally this tends to speed up the opening of negotiations about the difficulty. :-) I think it's unfair to my loves to use the time I spend with them as a palliative when there's trouble elsewhere; it keeps me from doing the work I need to do, the work I agreed to do when I took on the reality of the relationship."

If you want rules of thumb, you get to make them up yourself. No warranty expressed or implied, and keep checking the instrument panel throughout your flight.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO SLEEPS WHERE WHEN?

This is the most often asked question in panel discussions of polyamory, making some polyfolk wonder why sex is more interesting than the emotional and other intimacies of polyamorous life. The answer is that the people involved decide, and they decide *how* they decide, too. Some people have conferences and divide up the week, some people all pile happily into one big bed, and for all I know some people spin a big wheel with blinking lights on it each evening....and some people can love one another, have no sex, and choose to live in separate homes if that is most comfortable for them. The answer usually evolves out of discussion, empathy and practice, which makes it a lot like good lovemaking.

WHAT ABOUT LIVING TOGETHER AND COMMITMENT AND MARRIAGE AND ALL THAT?

Good question. Ask it; there are many, many approaches among the people on the newsgroup. From cohousing to communal living to group marriage to things-undreamed, there are a multitude of ways. Design a new one and see how it works. Unlearn assumptions about an old arrangement. Ask questions, and practice empathy.

Most of all, polyamory seems to be about building new configurations of relationships rather than trading people in and out like baseball cards.

HOW DOES A PERSON START (OR CONTINUE) A POLY RELATIONSHIP?

First, there are no rules. Nobody owns the copyright on polyamory. You get to build your own to fit you and your dearloves.

One thing that comes up in every conversation about polyamory is communication. If there is any basic building block, this is probably it. If you can talk about your hopes, you're on the way to realizing them.

If you're in a relationship already, and have not talked about how you feel and what you want, and you're asking the question "How do I start doing this poly stuff?", you may have some qualms about talking to your partner. What you do will have to be determined by your own ethics and your own situation; chances are that if you ask on the newsgroup, many polyfolk will suggest you talk it over with your partner, and they may point out that even if you two do not decide to live polyamorously, you may very well increase the intimacy level in your monogamous dyad by having the discussion.

On the other hand, it may all go blooey, and this is why people hesitate. On the third hand, nothing ventured, nothing gained. On the fourth hand, it might be useful to increase the intimacy level in the existing relationship and address any outstanding difficult issues there **before** having this particular discussion. Four more hands and you've got a nice statue of Kwan Yin there, and seeing as how she's the Goddess of Mercy, she might come in handy at a time like this.

Joe Avins feels that it's not a good idea to try to force a relationship into an attractive model; he favors the "relax, be open, and see what happens" approach, and quotes Pete Seeger: "Take it easy, but take it."

- contributed by Elise Matthesen
<elise@soils.umn.edu>

Many thanks again to Elise Matthesen <elise@soils.umn.edu> for this piece. She says, "What I hoped to do with this little icky essay was illustrate the flip side of some of the tools in the toolbox for healthy poly (and other) relationships. These 'bad tools' are humorous (pretty bent humor, too), but the good tools are serious."

▼ (from preceding page) ▼

6. Play on insecurities. This is an old favorite. Attempt to control your partner(s) by manipulating them through their insecurities. Playing on sexual insecurities in particular is a four-star winner. It's much more delicate than beating them up, though the resultant emotional damage can be remarkably similar.

7. Avoid intimacy. This can be performed in several ways, but the easiest is to confuse intimacy with "rubbing slippery bits together." Substitute the words "sex" and "love" for each other often in conversations. Repeat the mantra, "If you loved me, you'd know what I want." Figure out whether action or words are more likely to be ambiguous or misconstrued, and go with what gives you the most plausible deniability later.

8. Don't talk. Talking has been known to lead to communication if practiced carefully. Communication will seriously impair your fuck-up progress, and in certain cases will halt or reverse it entirely. If you *must* talk, use clichés and quotations from popular songs as much as possible.

9. If all else fails, make a safer-sex agreement with your partner(s) and then break it, contracting a communicable disease about which you do not then tell them. Double points awarded for avoiding all discussion of sexual matters entirely so that any "understanding" is completely deniable. For a coup de grace, tell them it wouldn't have happened if they had been sexually satisfying you like they were supposed to.

10. For the ultimate metafuck-up, remain technically faithful to your partner while breaking the spirit of whatever agreement you have whenever possible. Keep this knowledge bottled up to maximize fear, shame and resentment. Some people win the grand prize with the fig leaf-and-stinging-nettle cluster for self-inflicted suffering and wasted potential by managing to keep this strategy up until death do them part, concealing from their spouse the fact that they have been shamming happiness all these years.

ARE YOU BISEXUAL ENOUGH?

Bisexual Identity, Behavior and Monogamy

**STEPHANIE BERGER AND
CLARE HEMMINGS**

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▼
BiWomen
BBWN
P.O. Box 639
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This article is intended to open up some questions about the assumed relationship between bisexual identity and non-monogamy. Does the one necessarily mean the other? Does one have to be non-monogamous to be bisexual? Is someone in a long term monogamous relationship *really* bisexual?

The predominate stereotype of bisexuals is that we are always non-monogamous. Whether or not, and how, we confront this stereotype creates deep polarization in our community. For many bisexuals this schism means having to decide where our allegiances lie. Either we try and convince people that we can be monogamous, subsequently forcing many non-monogamous bisexuals to hide polyamorous relationships for the "good of the movement." Or we proclaim our polyamorous selves loud and clear and embrace those in the bisexuality community who are also polyamorous. Either way, we trap ourselves in the notion that it is sex and sex alone that defines bisexuality. We are being defined and defining ourselves using only our sexual behavior. We as bisexuals need to create alternative definitions that are not simply based upon who we desire.

We are not interested in justifying the existence of a bisexual identity or non-monogamy or monogamy. We will be exploring some of the assumptions about the overlap between these behaviors and identities. We'd like to begin with our own working definition of these terms—solely for the purpose of this article. We are not trying to give universal definitions.

Bisexual Identity—is a combination of both the desire for people of more than one biological sex/gender, whether one acts on it or not, and a political and/or personal sensibility that leads one to self-define in this way. There may be people who have sexual, emotional, personal relationships with people of more than one sex/gender who do *not* identify as bisexual (e.g. lesbians who sleep with men, or married straight men who have casual or anonymous sex with other men, etc.). Similarly there may be people who have sexual relationships with only one sex/gender who *do* identify as bisexual. Behavior does not equal identity.

Monogamy—is the acknowledgment of one's desire to be sexually involved with only one person at a time and the choice to act upon that. Also the agreement within a relationship to not have additional sexual partners.

Polyamory/Non-Monogamy—is the acknowledgment of the possibility to be sexually involved with more than one person at a time, whether or not one acts on this. Within the context of a primary or committed relationship the consent of all parties is

essential (otherwise we would define this as infidelity).

Let's look at some of the common beliefs that link bisexuality and sex in particular ways—we've all heard 'em:

Bisexuals *can't* be monogamous, even if they tell you they can or are. Bisexuals can only have their needs met by being in relationships with both men and women. Your bisexual lover will eventually leave you for someone of the "opposite" gender—this is compulsive. Someone who claims to be bisexual within a monogamous relationship is not really bisexual, they are either heterosexual or homosexual. To be bisexual one must be having sex simultaneously with a biological man and a biological woman—it's the threesome thing... Because of innate infidelity, bisexuals are not committed, either personally or politically. Bisexuals are sex-crazed and can never be satisfied: all bisexuals are kinky. There is only heterosexual or homosexual desire: there is no bisexual desire.

A few assumptions and realities that underlie these beliefs are: ignorance of sexual identity that is not simply defined by the consistent gender of the people you fuck (both outside and within the bisexual community); fear of having to acknowledge that our communities, and what we want within them, may not be so separate after all, which may mean that our sense of self is not sacred; scapegoating—bisexuals are scapegoated in particular ways by mainstream and lesbian and gay communities to serve selfish political purposes (e.g. the myth that bisexuals spread HIV and AIDS and the fear that if we include bisexuals then where do we draw the line); finally, that behavior and identity are assumed to have a direct and exclusive correlation—bisexuals are bisexuals because they fuck both men and women.

In terms of these stereotypes some bisexuals are some or all of these things, but to base bisexuality and desire on these assumptions alone is inadequate and erroneous. So then what underlies these stereotypes? We have to address this question to create our own self-definition as bisexuals and as a political community, as opposed to basing our identity solely on a 'knee-jerk' reaction to negative stereotypes. Isn't it possible that one of the reasons why the bisexual community has become so polarized around the issues of monogamy is because of the stereotypes that see bisexuality as only about sex? Bisexuality in these terms can never be more than a behavior and not a basis for a viable political movement. We would also argue that it is precisely because of the ways bisexual identity has been linked so closely with sex that the issue of monogamy *versus* non-monogamy has become so key in the construction of a bisexual identity. We must understand that our identities are not only sexual and personal, but political. Stephanie would argue and Clare would quote Foucault, that our identities are always political whether we like it or not. ▼

CALENDAR, from page 16



April 29 ♦ Saturday

An evening of Bi Poetry Come share your poetry, prose, art and music among bi women friends at Kathrine's in Brookline. 7:30pm. Call her at (617) 738-5383.

April 30 ♦ Sunday

BIWOMEN Brunch. 1:30pm at Mimi's, 950 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge.

May 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 5.

May 4 ♦ Thursday

Conference mailing night. Help mail out conference info for people who have registered for the May 19-21 NE Regional Conference on Bisexuality. See page 3.

Queer Fest. University of Massachusetts - Amherst Campus Center. "All day, all night." Call the events line (413) 54-LAMDA, or the Program for GLB Concerns at (413) 545-4824.

May 6 ♦ Saturday

Northeast Regional BiNET Meeting, Putney, Vermont. See page 2.

A Night of Colors Gay Prom 7:30pm-midnight, Holiday Inn's Ballroom, 21 Atwells Ave., Providence. \$35 per person, dinner included. Cash bar. Info: (401) 751-3322 (7-11pm nightly).

May 7 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See April 2

May 9 ♦ Tuesday

Conference Planning Meeting for the Sixth Annual Conference on Bisexuality (May 19-21). 1:30pm at the Bi Resource Office. See page 3.

May 10 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

BBWN Planning meeting. 7-10pm at the Bi Office. Help continue the momentum from the last meeting! All women welcome!

May 12 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: Diversity (submissions on all subjects welcome). Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, whatever, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

May 13 ♦ Saturday

The famous BBWN Potluck Brunch. 11am. Come join us at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge, for scrumptious food and fabulous chat! Call Robyn for directions at 5(617) 576-1066. All women welcome.

May 14 ♦ Sunday

Dancing at Ryle's! Put on your dancing shoes and celebrate Mother's Day with other Bi women at Ryle's Tea Dance. It's 5-10pm, so you might make it home in time to call Mom. Ryle's Tea Dance (upstairs) at 212 Hampshire Street (Inman Square), Cambridge. Across from the S&S Deli.

May 15 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us! Call Kathleen for more info (617) 825-2333.

May 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 5.

May 17 ♦ Monday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7pm at the Bisexual Resource Center.

May 18 ♦ Thursday

Conference packet stuffing night. Help stuff conference packets for the May 19-21 NE Regional Conference on Bisexuality. See page 3.

May 19-21 ♦ Thursday

The Northeastern Regional Conference on Bisexuality. See page 3.

May 28 ♦ Sunday

BIWOMEN Brunch. 1:30pm at Buddha's Delight. In Chinatown on Beach Street between Washington and Harrison. Nearest T stop: Chinatown on the Orange line.

May 30 ♦ Monday

NEW NIGHT!!!! BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Let's try a Tuesday for a change. Share stories, meet other bi women, help get the newsletter out. The more who show up the faster it goes! 7-9pm.

May 31 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 5.

June 5 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See April 2

The New Bisexual Resource Guide

Due out soon, new and updated, is the International Bisexual Resource Guide. Featuring over 1,400 bi and les-bi-gay organizations, lists of bi films and books, quotes, and a safer sex guide, this will be an invaluable addition to your bookshelf. The cost is \$8 (US\$). To order your copy, send a check or money order to BRC, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

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Washington, D.C. 20009**

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual
Resource Office, 95
Berkeley Street, Suite
613, Boston.

(617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 628-6219.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

April 2 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

April 4 ♦ Tuesday

Big Band Benefit for Sojourner!

The Longy Big Band plays at the 1359 Jazz Club, to benefit Sojourner: The Women's Forum, Boston's leading feminist newspaper. The fifteen-piece band boasts many tremendously talented people, including four great women, playing everything from Big Band favorites to contemporary pieces. First set begins around 8pm. The 359 Jazz Club is in the VFW building, 228B Green St, one block from Central Square T stop (Red line). Suggested donation \$10.



April 5 ♦ Wednesday

Conference Planning Meeting for the Sixth Annual Conference on Bisexuality (May 19-21). 7pm at the Bi Resource Office. *For more about the conference, see page 3.*

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

April 9 ♦ Sunday

Mobilize for Women's Lives. Rally, sponsored by the National Organization for



Women. Washington, D.C. Stop anti-abortion violence, stop the war on poor women, stop the Contract On America, Stop all violence against women. Call Boston NOW at (617) 782-1056.

Dancing at Ryle's! Hot babes, great dance tunes and a rockin' good time! Meet all your friends from BBWN tonight and every 1st Sunday of the month, 5-10pm, at Ryle's Tea Dance (upstairs) at 212 Hampshire Street (Inman Square), Cambridge. Across from the S&S Deli..

April 15 ♦ Saturday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 11:30am at the Baja Cafe (note 1/2 hr. late starting time), 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Cafe Moka on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Just show up and look for other bi people. (We all look alike, right?)

followed by...

Conference Planning Meeting for the Sixth Annual Conference on Bisexuality (May 19-21). 1:30pm at the Bi Resource Office. *For more about the conference, see page 3.*

April 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 5.

April 19 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7pm at the Bisexual Resource Center.

April 22 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Video Potluck Brunch at Ellyn's in Somerville. Noon. Come visit with other bi women, make friends, and watch videos. The plan is to have one basic, cool video and one erotic/sexy one. Call Ellyn at (617) 629-2727 for directions (or to suggest a video!).

CALENDAR continues on page 15

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Cambridge, MA 02140

NONMONOGAMY, BISEXUALITY, AND BOUNDARIES

REBECCA DAWN KAPLAN

For me, bisexuality and nonmonogamy both express a desire to question societally-mandated boundaries. I have no objection to a couple simply saying that they are so focused on each other that they have no desire to date or have sex with anyone else. However, this type of situation probably is the least frequent form that monogamy takes. Monogamy almost always involves a rule about refraining from doing something that someone wants to do. And it almost always involved some implication that one's "primary partner" has some sort of ownership or control over one's body. And it almost always defines primary relationships solely in sexual terms because it is almost always sex *per se* that is forbidden to have with other people, not love.

I also think monogamy can sometimes be used as a "crutch" - a way to prove that one "cares" without having to do anything. How is it that a lover who spends almost no time with me because they spend all of their free time watching football games would be considered "committed" to me, while someone who spent lots of "quality time" with me but also was occasionally sexual with other people would be not "committed" to me?

The standard definitions of monogamy say nothing about promising to devote energy or time to one's primary partner, they have only to do with promising not to devote certain kinds of energy to other people. That is part of why I think we need to look at other ways of conceptualizing relationships. If a lover of mine is spending so much time dating other people that she doesn't have time for me, I would not be happy with it. But the problem would be the lack of time for me, not the dating other people. Of course, time can be seen as a zero-sum entity, in which case time out with other people will usually mean time not with me, but that is true regardless of the erotic content of their activities.

Monogamy seems to embody the American conflict about sex. It elevates the realm of the erotic

to be the defining feature of a relationship, while simultaneously demonizing it as the one thing that it is wrong to do with other people.

As a nonmonogamous person, I feel that I always have to justify my preference. (Interestingly, I have considered myself "nonmonogamous" pretty consistently for years, since long before I considered myself queer). The notion that sex is somehow bad persists, and the fewer restrictions one has on one's sexual behavior, the more one is likely to be demonized.

There is an important parallel between bisexuality and nonmonogamy with regard to the issues of restrictions. Identifying as bi not only means that I can be attracted to people of more than one gen-

NONMONOGAMY continues on page 6

A note from the editors

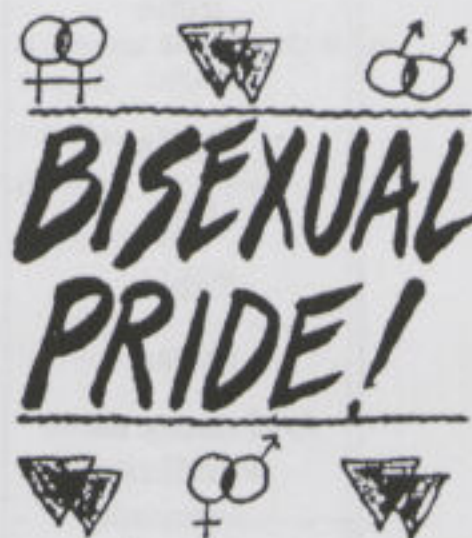
We originally planned for this issue to be on Diversity, but due to an abundance of articles left over from the last issue, as well as a need for more time to devote to such a broad and important topic, we will focus on Diversity for the August/September issue.

The newsletter issue on Diversity is meant to be a starting point, a springboard for further discussions. What kinds of diversity are we talking about? Ethnic, racial, gender, orientation, ability/disability, size, age, lifestyle, beauty/appearance, class, education. We welcome articles on any of these subjects, or others that you feel are appropriate, as well as on the general concept of diversity, including:

- the advantages of encouraging and promoting diversity within this or any group,
- the obstacles to achieving the goal of diversity,
- your experiences related to this subject.

In the near future, we will begin to devote entire issues to each of these subjects.

Sincerely,
Your faithful editors



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Volunteers of the Month



Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Marie

Ellyn

Stephanie

Irene

Ann

Carla

Gail

Robyn

Susan

And many more
wonderful
women!

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the August/Sept. issue:

Diversity

How is it achieved? What are the
obstacles? What are the benefits?

Probable future themes:

Humor Networking Men

DEADLINE for the June/July issue:

Friday, July 7, 1995

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or
handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and
include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published,
please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you
do not mind being listed as a contributor. You
may contribute anonymously, or just use your
first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news
and views to:

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Such a deal!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

**Editorial Team for this
issue of *BiWomen*:**

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Marie

Ellyn

Linda Blair

Kathleen Hepburn

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

BBWN meeting notes

BBWN's second organizing meeting of 1995
took place Wednesday, May 10th at the Bi Re-
source Center. Carla facilitated the meeting and
began by going through the items that had been
brainstormed at the March meeting.

- Ryle's Night: Starting in April people are infor-
mally gathering at Ryle's on the second Sunday of
each month for a "Bi Night."

- Movie Brunch: Ellyn had a movie brunch at her
house that went well. She suggested that it might
be nice to do an evening one sometime.

- Debbie has begun having BBWN events listed
in more queer and mainstream publications in the
area.

- 6-week Coming Out Workshop for Bi women.
Rosalie and Deb are developing this. Stay tuned
for dates, place, etc.

- Spring Hiking Day: Carla will be organizing this
with Vic for some time in June.

- Workshops dealing with Women's Sensuality
and a Lesbian/ Bi Dialogue are being developed
either for the summer or fall. Debbie, Ellyn and
Deb will be organizing these.

The group then had a long discussion about
possible Pride Day activities that BBWN could
sponsor or participate in. Traditionally, BBWN
sponsors a Bi Breakfast at the Community Church
downtown where folks can gather and then march
together. Carla is arranging for the space so that
we can again do this. There was also a suggestion
to have a Friday Pre-Pride gathering at someone's
home or at a restaurant. And to top off the week-
end, a Post-Pride Sunday afternoon Picnic/Bar-B-
Q which could then move to Ryle's for second
Sunday's Bi Night.

The group agreed that a float would be too
much of a commitment to undergo at this late
date, but that we should be thinking ahead to 1997
to celebrate BBWN's 15th Anniversary in a big bi
way.

Two more suggestions came up for summer
bi fun. First, an outing to Singing Beach in August
(check the calendar listing), and secondly, an
organized trip to Provincetown at some point.

If you have other ideas for BBWN to orga-
nize, join us at the next organizing meeting sched-
uled for Wednesday, June 28 at the Bi Resource
Center. The more bi energy we gather together
the better! ▽

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

Survey results are in

In the last newsletter a subscriber survey was included to get an idea of what people would like to see BBWN do in the future. The most popular items of interest were club/dance nights, a weekend in Provincetown, Pride events, movie brunch/night, and outdoor activities. There was slightly less interest in a support group, guest speakers, political organizing, workshops and going to a music or art event.

Most people who responded said they would like to participate in organized events, but a few of you bravely volunteered to organize or facilitate something. If you haven't heard from BBWN yet, don't think you are off the hook, we will be following up on all of the volunteer offers. If you did not respond to the survey, but you have great idea for BBWN to do, please write or call the office with your suggestions.

To give you a flavor of what readers said in the survey, we include a sampling of responses:

What do you like/dislike about the current BBWN offerings?

- *I love the newsletter. I look forward to it every other month.*
- *It is all good, only sometimes I wish it were easier to contact folks.*
- *All the current offerings are important, but they have been pretty much the same for years. We need some new ideas. More publicity. Get the newsletter out, make leaflets for specific events and post them.*
- *Like: newsletter and brunches. Dislike: No stable steering committee for five years.*
- *The newsletters are excellent! Especially the last four.*
- *A couple of brunches I called about were at people's houses that were not near the T.*
- *Often I get the newsletter after some calendar events are already over.*

Do you have any thoughts about BBWN and possible political actions?

- *Out Bi women should be organizing in other political groups as out bi women. We've been shy bis for years and the climate is more open to bis and transgendered folks in the more radical groups and the college groups. And the less open groups need a wake-up call.*
- *People should "out" their autos. It's such an up to pass a queer car in rural New Hampshire or stuffy Connecticut.*

What do you think about the monthly BBWN introduction meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center?

- *It did seem very "coming out-ish," definitely not about sharing resources.*

• *I was under the impression that it was going to be about coming out. Maybe if we could be clearer about what it is as well as maybe have different meetings for the two different purposes.*

• *When I went I was under the impression it was a business meeting that there would be mostly old members doing planning, etc. and new members getting introduced. Since that isn't what happens I think it should be called "An Introduction to the BBWN."*

• *It should be publicized in all calendar listings in lots of publications.*

Any ideas about increasing volunteer participation in BBWN?

- *Offer pizza parties. Give out free tix to events.*
- *Organizing and motivating volunteers is never an easy task. Perhaps with a phone list we would be more easily accessible. And more informal events has potential to draw more folks in.*
- *Maybe have a steering committee in place with rotating members so there would be consistency.*
- *Use the buddy system. A tenured volunteer asks a specific new/inactive person to help with a particular task for a particular amount of time.*
- *A regular steering committee meeting at the exact same time every month forever!*
- *Break jobs into very small pieces. i.e., answer the phone one day a month.*

Other Comments:

- *It would be great if there were other women in New Hampshire or Northern Massachusetts who would want to car pool to events in Boston/Cambridge.*
- *How about having a local paper do a story on the BBWN?*

Thanks to all who responded for your ideas and insights. It'll take plenty of energy to keep what we like going, improve what we don't and follow up on new ideas. So if you're not already involved, WE NEED YOU! The next planning meeting is 7pm Wednesday, June 28 at the Bi Office, 95 Berkeley St. Hope to see you there! ▼

Can't get enough of that Bi-stuff?

Here's just a couple of the many groups who also publish newsletters:

The Bisexual Network of Austin

P.O. Box 8439
Austin, TX 78713
(512) 370-9573

Northwest Bi Way C/O BiNet Oregon

P.O. Box 2593
Portland, OR 97208
(503) 299-4764

Elemental Treasures: Erotic Poems and Prose

This small but touching Chapbook containing 14 poems of mostly non-gender specific erotica has been well received in both gay and mainstream bookstores. To order a copy send \$6 to Book Request, 5420 Bryan Street, Dallas, Texas 75206. Please make check/money order payable to: Sharla Clos. Signed copies are available upon request.

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Bill Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination Passes in RI

On March 29, the Rhode Island House of Representatives approved a bill prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit. This bill, which will amend Rhode Island's existing anti-discrimination statutes, passed by the largest margin ever, 57-41.

This is the 12th year the bill has been proposed in the legislature.

Dropped from the bill was the request for the Department of Education to include an "educational program for public school students... which would emphasize the origins of prejudice, harmful effects, and its incompatibility with American principles of equality and fair play."

The bill passed the Senate on May 19 by a margin of 26-21, without the proposed "boy scout" amendment which would have exempted youth-service organizations. Governor Almond signed it into law on May 22.

Congratulations to all who have worked so hard for so many years.

In the Mail...

Dear BBWN,

Thank you for printing my ad in the last issue of BiWomen. Please also let Cecilia Tan know I thought she wrote an excellent lead article. She found words for feelings I've thought and felt but didn't know how to describe.

— Johnny V.

✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍

Hello,

Please let me say that your newsletter has helped me so much. I am 17 years old and I am in need of support. There are a few other bi girls here and they always seem to come for me for advice or support and I feel I don't always have the answers. Your newsletter has provided resources and support that is sorely needed. Bless you, we need more resources like BiWomen. Thank you.

— Anonymous

✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍

Dear Folks at BBWN,

I must thank you for the great issue on non-monogamy and polyamory! I'd like to get a couple extra copies to hand around among some of my friends who I think might be contemplating the non-monogamy idea.

I had forgotten how much being online and reading alt.polyamory made me feel like... well... a normal human being? It seems there's very little poly stuff going on up here (Portland, Maine) - or else I just don't know how to find it - and every now and then I start feeling like a changeling from Mars or something.

Since I read alt.polyamory so long ago, it has often occurred to me that it would be great to transfer that sort of energy to a newsletter, if it could be done. This issue of BiWomen seemed to do almost that. I wonder if it's possible to keep the energy and momentum going all on letters written back and forth for public consumption? I don't even know how you could get something like this started, but I'd love to hear back if anyone has any ideas.

Thanks for the great issue!

— D. W. Marsh

the usual

- by Brenda Be

Wrote to you again today
think I'll send it this time
I didn't mention the night I cried
in his arms because they were not yours

I need misery to cope with happiness

Talked of you today
over grilled cheese and a Winston
The hole out back got wider
I can barely see the concrete stairs inside

Beautiful acid woman
so ironic that you ruined my trip last night
I remembered the awful ones we had
when we hated humans
Even that I miss

I watch from the window
and pray the hole won't grow
but I hear you mocking me
with Dylan in my ears

I stayed in bed 'til noon today
called in my excuses
just too cold to be about when that goddamn
chill creeps in
No one knows it's from the hole
and only I can smell the stench



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ARISA

JANUARY 1995

BY DEBBIE BLOCK-SCHWENK

Arisa bills itself as a "speculative media convention," although for simplicity's sake I refer to it as a science fiction convention. Held every January in Boston, there are panels and workshops on a wide variety of topics. When I registered and received my program, I was surprised to see a panel entitled "Monogamy vs. Non-Monogamy" to be held that evening. As a non-monogamy wannabe, I had to attend.

At least 50 people crowded the conference room around the five panelists. They began by throwing out the title, saying that there was no "versus" but that people could be monogamous if they so choose. Next, comments from the audience prompted a working definition of non-monogamy: apart from the obvious, it is consensual and honest toward all parties concerned (as opposed to "cheating"). Then the panelists introduced themselves. They represented a wide range of experience, from a woman who was just thinking about non-monogamy to a non-monogamous married couple (of whom at least the wife was bisexual), a bi man who had been married and had been involved in several trios with his wife and another man, and a non-monogamous lesbian.

Much of the discussion focused on how to explain your sexual practices, not only to the monogamy-worshipping world but to one's relationships (who's a secondary, a tertiary, or a primary and what does it all mean? The lesbian said in her life she often has a "primary" partner and then "friends with privileges.") Most people describe their secondary lovers as "friends" when talking to their co-workers, family, etc. One woman who came out to her sister used her bisexuality to justify her non-monogamy, which helped her sister accept the idea. (I think this may be OK on an individual

level but as a large-scale justification it both perpetuates the myth that bis cannot be happy in monogamous relationships and doesn't allow for people who are either homosexual or heterosexual to practice non-monogamy as well.)

One man commented on the lack of community among non-monogamous people, noting that "we just throw parties." Others talked about the lack of role models for responsible non-monogamy (of course, cheating has many fine role models, including presidents and soap operas). One man mentioned that his wife felt intimidated because some people interpret "non-monogamous" as "will sleep with anyone" and were heavy-handed in their approach. However, many of the problems mentioned were acknowledged to be communication problems which could happen in any relationship, and there are unfortunately people whose approach to a sexual partner is going to be uncomfortably aggressive whether it is in a non-monogamous party or a singles' bar.

The panelist who had been married sounded one note of caution, saying that because he and his wife had the freedom to find other partners, they had not concentrated enough on their own relationship, which caused its breakup.

Someone asked about children and several members of the audience said that children raised in non-monogamous households generally did fine and think that it is normal, although they do learn not to share all the details of their family lives with friends.

I found the discussion extremely empowering and affirming for me that people who live non-monogamously take it seriously, are honest, and to a great extent are interested in building caring relationships with people who truly interest them. While many of the participants and audience members were bisexual (and some were gay and lesbian), even those who were heterosexual shared the same burden of living a lifestyle that most of society considers alien or immoral (even though the adultery rate as gathered from various polls is always at least 50% for men). It felt great to have an open, responsible discussion of responsible non-monogamy and perhaps BBWN will sponsor its own talk sometime in the future. ▽



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- *Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives* (Judith Ochshorn). Examines the connection between feminist spirituality and its contributions to the establishment of women's mental health. Stimulated from discussions between feminist therapists and feminist theologians/ritualists.
- *Biology of Sexual Preference* (John P. DeCecco). Describes, reviews, and questions recent biological research on sexual orientation.

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POLY RESOURCES

(a list from the USENET
newsgroup Alt.polyamory)

a.) E-mail mailing lists

Triples - to subscribe send a message to triples-request@hal.com. This is a moderated list for discussion of poly issues.

Poly-Boston - to subscribe send a message to majordomo@world.std.com with the line "subscribe poly-boston" in the body of the message. This is a list for poly and poly-friendly folk in the Boston, MA USA area.

b.) Organizations

Abundant Love Institute
Membership Information
P.O. Box 4322
San Rafael, CA 94913-4322
(415) 507-1739

Church of All Worlds
P.O. Box 1542
Ukiah, CA 95482

Live the Dream
6454 Van Nuys Blvd #150
Van Nuys, CA 91401
818/361-6737

Loving Alternatives
P.O. Box 10509
State College, PA 16805-0509

Family Tree
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Center Barnstead, NH 03225

Tri-State Polyamory
P.O. Box 625
New Providence, NJ 07974-0625
net: hardy@panix.com

Alternatives to Monogamy
P.O. Box 4172
Wheaton, IL 60189-4172
(708) 510-7027

Pali Paths
P.O. Box 22586
Honolulu, HI 96823
(808) 239-6824
email:
hwhite@uhunix.uhcc.hawaii.edu

continues on next page

RADICAL RELATIONSHIPS

BY ROBYN OCHS

As I rush through what seems like an overwhelming mass of commitments, there are sometimes opportunities I feel I just can't pass up. When I learned that the last issue of BiWomen was to have nonmonogamy as its theme, I just couldn't resist the temptation to put my own two cents in on the subject.

I write to you from the perspective of someone long active in the bi community who has always preferred monogamy FOR MYSELF.

As one of those self-identified monogamous bisexuals, people sometimes say things to me that they wouldn't feel comfortable saying in public. I've had monogamous bisexuals at bi conferences complain to me that they think they may be the only monogamous bi there. I reassure them, saying that bisexuals come in all lifestyles, and they are far from the only "monogamooses" present. But sometimes it can seem that way. Maybe nonmonogamous folks, because they feel silenced and unaccepted out there in the "real world," get a lot of validation from being out, loud and proud in bi circles. Interestingly, the few studies that have been done on bisexually identified people have found that there are more of us who prefer monogamy than prefer nonmonogamy. A 1990 Bi Women survey, for example, found that 52.4 percent preferred monogamy, 22.5 prefer nonmonogamy, and 20.4 percent were not sure which they would prefer. Maybe we are more likely to prefer nonmonogamy than the "general population" (my guess), but many of us like having just one romantic or sexual partner.

Why am I writing about this issue? I'm writing because I believe that there is an underlying current of tension between the monogamous and nonmonogamous sectors of our community, with some of the nonmonogamous folks viewing the monogamous folks as incredibly conservative and retro, and some of the monogamous folks afraid that the nonmonogamous folks are reinforcing negative stereotypes and therefore giving us all a "bad name."

I have this idea which I call "radical monogamy," (not to be confused with unthinking conformity with the status quo) and in fact I think it makes an excellent pairing with "radical nonmonogamy" (not to be confused with rebellion for rebellion's sake, or sexual compulsivity). The recipe for radical monogamy (or radical nonmonogamy too, for that matter) is the following: Start by throwing out the external messages about how we should or should not behave. Many bis (and lesbians and gays) have already begun that process by virtue of not fitting the heterosexual norm. Then think. Question. Consider the following

question: what works FOR ME? If I take away, to the extent possible, all the external messages about how I should or should not live my life, what do I discover? What do I want? What makes me happiest? To that recipe, add in honesty, and the number of CONSENTING adults required to make your vision work.

Whether what you have just created involves no partners, or multiple partners, good luck to YOU. What you have just created is radical, as opposed to reactive. Because it's freely chosen, and it's what floats your boat. ▽



NONMONOGAMY, from page 1

der, it also means that I do not have to define someone's gender to interact with them. For monosexual people, it is vital to their identity that they be able to "peg" the gender of their potential lovers. Now, I am not saying that bisexuals are "gender blind" or that gender does not matter - it is often very important. The point is simply that being bisexual means that one difference is removed from the realm of gender - I do not divide the world into "the gender I will date" and "the gender I won't." Eliminating this distinction reduces the urgency to categorize other people's gender. If we meet someone whose gender we cannot determine, we do not need to feel compelled to figure it out before deciding whether or not we can flirt with them.

Nonmonogamy has a similar effect in terms of being free from the need to determine where the line dividing "sex" from "not-sex" falls. Being nonmonogamous means not only that I am free to be sexual or not with a variety of people, it also means that I do not have to determine whether a situation is sexual or not before I decide to enter it. When a monogamous person is offered a backrub by a friend, or anything like that, they have to figure out whether it is sexual, decide where the line between sexual and non-sexual is, and have that line determine their behavior. Because I am nonmonogamous, I do not even need to think about that line. There are many important factors that can and should enter into our decisions about behavior. Considerations such as whether or not someone is comfortable engaging in various activities do enter the decision-making, but activities do not need to be labeled "sex" and "not-sex" in order to do so, nor do individuals need to be clearly identified as either someone I am involved with or someone I am not involved with. Without monogamy working as a guideline, we are free to have relationships of varying types and forms. It becomes acceptable not only to be friends or lovers, but also to not decide. Once certain types of relationships are not excluded, it becomes less important to categorize one's relationships into specific types. ▽

The All-Inclusive Cambridge St. Patrick's Day Parade

by Sharon Gonsalves

For the past few years there's been a standoff between the organizers of Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade and GLIB, an Irish American Gay Lesbian and Bisexual group that wants to participate. In 1993, the courts ruled that GLIB could not be excluded, so they marched with a police escort and were only allowed a contingent of 25 people. In 1994, the organizers cancelled the parade rather than have GLIB participate. This year



The first in a series of three poems
by Blanca C. Alcaraz:

1. (untitled)

A sweet, soft shade of rose is your color
That exposes itself to me once I have
Unraveled and peeled away the protective layer
that

Covers you —

I bring my mouth closer to you, or
is it you that comes
closer to me?

Does it really matter:?

My nostrils that devour your sweet perfume
Inhale you deep within .. Quickly intoxicating
the rest of me (all of me)

I take you deep inside my mouth —

My tongue, the same eager, impatient child,
is the first to savor you ... Awakening
all of my senses by the

Sweetness of your taste —

My teeth ... nibble you ... hesitating before they
Clench you firmly between them ... those painfully-
sweet

Bites that devour you ... taking you in —

As I grasp you from within, I push my tongue
against you,

Against my teeth you are ... I stroke you

Over and Over

With my Tongue

And with every swallow I Crave you
Even More.

You're all that I need between my teeth, my
mouth

and my heart,

MY SWEET BUBBLE GUM!

they declared the parade a private event with an anti-gay theme.

Enter Ken Reeves, the out gay African American mayor of the "People's Republic of Cambridge". Mayor Reeves decided that Cambridge should host an all inclusive St. Patty's Day Parade to offset the hatefulness of the Boston event. Pat Fitzgibbon, owner of an Irish pub in Cambridge, stepped in to organize and a wonderful event was born.

Ninety groups registered to march in the parade ranging from Hibernian societies to high school bands to local businesses to LGBTQ groups. Despite the chilly weather, crowds turned out to cheer and a spirited atmosphere was created. An Irish festival took place at the parade's end and a good time was had by all.

Kudos to our very own Cathleen Finn who has been a GLIB spokesperson throughout the course of events. She deserves much praise for her willingness to be on the front lines and has done a superb job in dealing with the media. Way to go! ➤

off our backs



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continued from
preceding page

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509 East 42nd Street
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Beyond Monogamy Inc.
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Morley, WA 6062? AUSTRALIA

South Bay Intinet
P.O. Box 70203
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 730-9622

Glendower
P.O. Box 520291
Independance, MO 64052
email: DWEST@delphi.com

Loving Alternatives
P.O. Box 1322
Greenwood, IN 46142
email: poly@holli.com

The above organizations are for people interested in poly relations rather swinging. The following are for swingers and may be more friendly towards "cruising".

North America Swing Club
Assoc.
P.O. Box 7128
Buena Park, CA 90622

SSC Magazine
P.O. Box 459
San Dimas, CA 91773

Most of these groups will send you information if you submit an SASE.

The former IRC and PEP have merged to become the Abundant Love Institute and are jointly publishing a magazine called "Loving More". The magazine includes personal ads (members receive one free) which are \$10 each. A lending library of fiction and non-fiction titles and a list of local support groups are also available to members.

Poly ads may be placed on the net in alt.personals and alt.personals.poly. They are inappropriate for alt.polyamory.



CALL FOR FILM/ MEDIA WORKS

The 9th New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival is pleased to present MIX 95, Nov. 2 -12, New York City and MIX BRASIL: 3rd Festival das Manifesta es da Sexualidade, which will tour cities throughout Brazil Oct. - Dec. 1995. We encourage submissions of:

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FULL CHARGE, CIRCLE LOVE

BY LORRAINE HUTCHINS,
CIRCA 1979

Six of us scrunched in that little bursting car together waiting out the storm. Giddy from beer and smoking, throbbing with eros after that film, kissing and fondling randomly, glad for the excuse of the rain, the film, releasing us.

Went back to Rob's place, his tiny apartment all full of rugs and pillows to cuddle in. Magalita started, pressing soft large breasts over each to reach another, giving large french kisses, then pulling back, saying she was sorry, she had to leave to get up for work the next day. Somehow that was the signal, we all pulled her down to us and made her stay.

Mass massage. Shedding. Exquisite thrill of 3 tongues intermingling in one's mouth, then 4, then 5, dissolve in giggles trying 6.

Sisters watch brothers touch each other for the first time, shyly, then with increasing passion and possession. Discover ourselves our own salty womb essences, hot yearning pockets of tendernesses. Sucking, sucking, coming, coming. Coos, groans, and explosions. Something real, fragile and beautiful; a group-creature emerges. Intoxicating, frightening, touching so deep. Safe and cradled in a whole group's loving arms. Satiated. Running from it like an addiction. So sweet, you'll never want anything less again. Strutting to the bathroom, showering in pairs, falling back on the floor interwoven again. Feasting on mingled essences, getting up for thirsty drinks, caressing sweat off friends dear brows, pushing the limits back again.

Something had been moving us all towards one union that year. We'd worked the summer together, politically, professionally, building our trusts and

linking up our fates in some national coalition crises that came down, that we took part in and guided around us.

The six of us. Billy loved men, revelled in them all over the country in his many gay movement organizing travels. He looked like a burly brown football player and a sweet teddy bear rolled into one. Always laughing, always hugging, loving, room in his big big heart for an ex-wife he still loved, her lovers and his, and three children they shared together too. Mojo was all undulation and rapping, a brilliant beauty, kept-man of an academic fop, a dancer and a dreamer himself, accountant on the side when he could stand it. Rob, born of a Greek immigrant and a hillbilly, had spent his time being a Jesus freak rock musician before claiming his own sensuality and intellectual freedom and helping to build the anti-draft and latin american solidary movements in Washington. Magalita came to us as a secretary at the national coalition office where we all worked. Blonde, radiant, unassuming, exuberant farmgirl practicing vocal scales in the elevators, in the office cubicles, trilling her ecstasy unabashed, out loud. Jay was Rob's girlfriend and still lived at home with her parents but was looking for a way out fast. A hot agitated Scorpio with flashing brown eyes, long brown hair, round beating hips, always in motion, always changing clothes and poses, looking for something new. And then there was me, earth mama, cool convener, bewildered energy conductor underneath. A shy outrageous woman with too much weight around her, great ambitions, great guts, great abilities too.

The whole group never got together again, orgasmically, like that. But little ripples, little permutations kept on happening, playing out, until our imaginations and desires were exhausted, until we realized how far we'd travelled and retreated to safer corners again. Rob and Billy made love on their lunch-hours, Rob and Mojo sometimes too. Mojo's jealous lover called us up to complain that Mojo wasn't coming home anymore, was always staying late at the coalition office mesmerized. Magalita fell in love with her Australian yoga teacher and decided to get married and move back there with him, but she still sends back naked pictures each time she's pregnant with a new kid. Jay and Rob and I formed a triad that existed and held us in its spell for over a year after that.

One of the things our triad and larger circle communication was built on was respect for love and energy, however expressed, no physical or genital tyranny. During that time we each experienced energy-builds and releases, i.e. orgasms, through the tops of our heads, or coming out our fingertips or eyes linked with another — as powerful and as pleasurable as any coming before or since. I was honored by this group and learned to honor myself, FOR myself, not for any particular sexual interchanges performed. And yet the energy passed between us as a conducting ring was sexual, sacred, trembling with all our dreams.

CIRCLE LOVE continues on next page

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CIRCLE LOVE, from preceding page

Jay and Rob had a stormy time and I soon tired of trying to keep them together, and of trying to love each of them separately without taking sides. Jay found someone new to marry her and Rob went through many changes, many lovers, many jobs, jumping back and forth, leaving town and coming back again, going in and out of relationships. But always he and I have remained special soulmate friends.

I still don't know why the circle died. I don't accept the superficial explanation of jealousies, conflicting priorities. These things were there. Yet also, I think we just took it as far as we could, got a full bewildering charge and had to pull back for deeper more solitary processing.

May these little circles keep on happening. We each went on, we dispersed, but the savouring, the urge to recreate this, lives on.

AFTERWARDS: Note, 1994. The film referred to in the first line is "Pourquoi Pas?" (Why Not?) a french film about group love. The circle referred to was a moon circle. We met at the full and new moons and mediated together, raised energy, included a larger number of folk than the ones mentioned above, who may not have had sex with us, but were drawn to the energy around us, too.



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POLY SONGS

(a list from the USENET
newsgroup Alt.polyamory)

Joan Armatrading, "The
Weakness in Me"

David Crosby, Jefferson Air-
plane, "Triad"

Devo, "Happy Guy"

Enya, "Marble Halls"

Howard Jones, "Noone is to
Blame"

King Crimson, "Man With an
Open Heart"

Kathy Mar (her new tape)

Deidre McCalla, "Don't
Doubt It"

Mondo Vita, "Four Way
Stop"

The Monks, "Love in Stereo"

Michael Nesmith, "Different
Drum"

Prince, Cyndi Lauper, "When
U Were Mine"

Chris Rea, "Nothing to Fear"

Restless Heart, "Why Does It
Have to Be"

The Roches, "The Two That I
Want"

• • • • • APOLOGIES: • • • • •

- 1. Credit is due to •
- Holly Wilper for •
- contributing •
- polyamory FAQs •
- 2. We included an old •
- ad for Nina Carroll. •
- The correct ad appears •
- below •
- • • • •

Letter from the Lioness

© Elise Matthesen

The most amazing thing happened when I was in a video the other day. It was not the first time I've had my image captured, but it is the first time I've ever had an orgasm on camera.

It was part of a project by Joani Blank called "Faces of Ecstasy," a video of people's faces - and just their faces - at the moments of pleasure. (Or minutes of pleasure, depending on just how erotically blessed one is, I suppose.)

One of the things I was thinking about afterward was that there will be faces of queer and straight folk in this video, and as far as I know, we won't be labelled. Because of the nature of the project, nobody watching the video will know what precisely is making us smile or moan or pant or roar. Or whom, or even how many; Joani's instructions were to reach orgasm in whatever way pleased us, alone or with one or two other people in the booth with us.

I noticed something interesting about the booth itself: when I settled myself down in the way I usually please myself, I had trouble keeping my face in either of the places they had set up the camera to focus. There had been assumptions made about how people position themselves that had left me out. And if I was left out, I'd bet that others were left out as well.

In a way, it reminded me of the times I'd be reading a story, humming along happily in my queer way, only to bump up short against a heterosexist assumption that didn't leave room for me. Nobody could see my face, because I didn't fit in the booth the way the designers thought all people did.

I'm not saying this to diss Joani; she was cool, even if she did tease me about keeping my hat on while I came. (I replied with dignity that it is a femme's prerogative to wear any damn pearl-encrusted little velvet chapeau she pleases, and I am for the record completely willing to defend this right for non-femmes as

well, for the headwear - or anything else - of your choice.)

Anyhow, the very next day I went to a benefit for Cal-ACT (Californians Against Censorship Together), Feminists for Free Expression, and COYOTE, and I saw Joani again, along with Susie Bright, Carol Queen, Betty Dodson, and a whole bunch of people who really inspire me. All through the years of dealing with the leftovers of childhood sexual abuse and shamming, it's been important to me personally to connect clearly with the good parts of sexuality, the parts that inspire and delight me. Since I'm a Leo, it probably comes as no surprise that it's often the fierce, feisty and outrageous parts that communicate tenderness, pride and passion to me.

But I've got to confess something: when I was in that booth, after we had finally gotten the camera to find my face, I had what I was afraid was "the wrong kind of orgasm." Generally I'm pretty noisy and appreciative and triumphantly delighted and all that, so when a contemplative, inward-turning orgasm found me, I was startled, and then worried that I wouldn't give the camera much hint of what was going on. What about the video? But an orgasm is an orgasm, and one must be faithful to each in its individuality, at least if one is a lioness, so I went with the flow.

Who knows? Maybe somebody watching the video will see that entranced, inward-turned face and think, "Ohhh! There's somebody who does it like I do! I'm not so weird."

Not that there's anything wrong with being weird. But sometimes we need to show our weirdnesses in order to give each other the courage to be what we are.

I guess that's what being on video was about - that, and the delight in the concept. I mean, hey, a video of people's faces in ecstasy? What a lovely, peaceful, revolutionary idea. And I learned something while doing it. If you see it someday, you can see the moment I learned, the moment I let go and relaxed into being myself instead of what I thought the camera and filmmaker wanted.

It was a lot better that way, by the way.

There's probably a moral in that, but I'm not going to winkle it out just now. I'm just going to sit here and smile for a while. It's a political act, y'know?

Bio: I am a bisexual activist, have been out for nineteen years, am currently happily involved with two men and a woman (who are not involved with each other, for those who keep track of such things), and am writing a lot since I got laid off six weeks ago. Other modifying notes include: hearing-impaired, femme, fierce, and fond of cats and gardens.





Beth Israel Hospital



NINA CARROLL, M.D.
Gynecology

Chestnut Hill Plaza
1244 Boylston Street
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

(617) 277-3119
Emergency Page
(617) 730-3188

CALENDAR *from page 12*

poets), or short prose readings (10 minute limit, please). At the women's Center in Cambridge. For info, call Katherine at (617) 738-5383.

June 24 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Sharon's in Central Square. Noon - 3pm. Good food, fun women - what more do you need to know? Call Sharon for directions at (617) 497-7646. All women welcome.



June 22 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. 7-10pm at the Bi Office. We've got lots of great ideas for the summer/fall. Come add yours to the pile - and help make them happen. All women welcome!

June 25 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Women's Hike. 11 am. Enjoy the beauty of the outdoors with other women. Somewhere in the Greater Boston area soon, possibly the Blue Hills Reservation. Call Carla for location and info on transportation/car pooling at (617) 522-7432.

July 2 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See June 4.

July 9 ♦ Sunday

Dancing at Ryle's! Hot, sweaty women, great music, \$3 cover. How can you go wrong? Dance with other BBWN women tonight and every 2nd Sunday of the month. (In the last issue we incorrectly said it was the 1st Sunday. Oops.) 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. Tea dance is 5 -10pm, but the "fashionably late" majority generally arrive around 7:30 -8:00pm.

July 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 7.

July 7 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: Diversity (submissions on all subjects welcome). Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, whatever, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

July 10-12 ♦ Monday - Wednesday

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England's Sixth Annual Advanced Sexuality Institute in Kennebunkport, Maine. A 3-day seminar designed to encourage individuals to recognize and reflect on the rigidity of our current sexual "norms". Speakers include Leslie Feinberg and a transgender panel. For info, call 1-800-488-9638.

July 10 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us! Call Kathleen for more info (617) 825-2333.

July 12 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

July 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 7.

July 21-23 ♦ Friday - Sunday

BiNet USA Annual Mtg. Minneapolis. Activists need to be together and share stories nationally at least once a year. A chance to support, nurture, train each other for the continuing struggle — and party with activist bis all weekend! Info: call Stephanie (617) 666-3149 or send e-mail to rain@glib.org

July 22 ♦ Saturday

Bi Women Potluck Picnic Brunch. Let's have a brunch outside! We'll meet at noon at Summit Avenue Park in Brookline. It's more private than the esplanade and has an awesome view. Take the Green Line "C" train to the Summit Stop (from Boston it's the 1st stop after Coolidge Corner). Summit Ave. is directly across the street. Follow Summit up the hill. At the top you'll see a small park. Plates, cutlery, cups, will be provided. For more info, call Debbie at 731-9060. If it rains, we'll try it on the next day, Sunday the 23rd. All women welcome.



July 25 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Now on Tuesday Night!!! Share stories, meet other bi women, help get the newsletter out. The more who show up the faster it goes! 7-9pm at the Bi Office.

August 6 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See June 4.

August 8-13 ♦ Tuesday - Sunday

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. A camping village on 600 acres of forest. Over 300 workshops are scheduled over the week, along with film tents, concerts tents, writing tents, and spirituality tents. Info: PO Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

August 12 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Beach Day! What's summer without a day at the beach? Come play in the waves at Singing Beach with us. Meet on the Commuter Rail platform of North Station at 9:45 am. We'll take the 10:15am Rockport/Ipswich train to Manchester, then walk together to the beach. The train ticket is \$3.50 each way, but if there's more than 10 of us, we can get a discount. Rain date will be Sunday, August 13. Call Linda at 282-3537 for more info.

September 1 - 3 ♦ Friday - Sunday

UK's National Bisexual Conference, University of Central England, Birmingham. Open to bisexuals, their friends, partners and anyone who feels allied to the bisexual community. Non-UK residents welcome. Inquiries by e-mail to: BiCon@bham.ac.uk.



Great New Book!

Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, and Visions is a new book soon to be published by Haworth Press, Inc. Edited by Naomi Tucker, this first of its kind analysis of bisexual politics and theory presents a vivid collection of essays that explore the history, strategies, diversity, and philosophy of the bisexual community in the United States.

Topics include "Bisexual Women, Feminist Politics" by Tamara Bower, "Understanding the Lesbian/Gay 'Bisexual' Debates" by Elizabeth Armstrong, and "Your Fence is Sitting on me: The Hazards of Binary Thinking" by Rebecca Kaplan. Several local activists (and BBWN) members have contributed to this revolutionary volume.

\$27.96 hardcover/ \$11.96 softcover. Orders or info: 1-800-342-9678.

BUTTONS

Bisexual Pride
Visi Bi lity
Bisexual Queer



on sale at the Bi Office.

Send
\$1.00

plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 50¢ postage and handling) to:

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

July 8 - Saturday - Stephanie's "Now's Your Last Chance" - Going-Away/30-days-before-her-30th-birthday PARTY! All are welcome. Early evening in Somerville. Call for directions (617) 666-3149. (She's moving to S.F. July 10)

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual
Resource Office, 95
Berkeley Street, Suite
613, Boston.
(617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

**Lesbian/Gay/
Bisexual
Freedom Trail
Band**



Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

June 4 ♦ Sunday

10th Annual AIDS Pledge Walk. Sponsored by the AIDS Action Committee. The 10 K walk starts at the Boston Common and is the largest single source of non-gov't funding for the fight against AIDS and HIV in MA. Info: (617) 424-WALK. / TTY (617) 450-1423.

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

June 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

June 9 ♦ Friday

Pizza and sign making party. 7pm. Join us at Robyn's in Central Square to gear up for Pride! Wear your thinking caps and help us brainstorm the best bi positive messages for the parade. Sign making materials will be provided. Call Robyn at (617) 576-1066 for directions.

June 10 ♦ Saturday Boston Pride Day!!



Bi Pride Brunch. 9 - 11am at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St. in Copley Square. Sliding scale \$4-10. Volunteers welcome and appreciated. Call Matt at (617) 894-5372 for info or to volunteer.

Pride Parade. After the brunch, march with the Bi contingent. See old friends, make new ones and celebrate the biggest queer holiday of the year together! Meet at 11am in front of the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston Street, to find out our starting point.

2nd Annual Lesbian Pride Dance. Boston City Hall, 9 pm - 2 am. Come celebrate pride with hundreds of other queer women. Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. There will be a catered reception at Dakota's from 7 pm - 10 pm (\$30), which includes admission to the dance. For info or tickets, call the Fenway Community Health Center's "Fenway Care" line at (617) 247-2273.

June 11 ♦ Sunday

Dancing at Ryle's! Wrap up Pride weekend the right way - more dancing, more partying, and more hot bi babes! Head on down to Ryles and join your sisters from BBWN for the best women's Tea dance in town! (OK, the only women's Tea Dance in town, but who's counting?) 5 - 10pm, 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge.

June 17 ♦ Saturday

Rhode Island Pride The Ocean State's own Pride March — its 20th one — starts from the State House in Providence on June 17th. Parties, dances, performances, and a hair cut-a-thon begin June 9th!

June 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 7.

June 23 ♦ Friday

Bi Poetry Reading. For BBWN's second poetry night, we're expecting to get even more proof of the tremendous talent in our community. Bring your favorite poem (by you or your favorite



CALENDAR continues on page 11

Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network – and help us keep the newsletter alive!

Subscribe to

BiWomen!

To start a new subscription or
renew your current one, fill out
the form below.

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Address _____

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Sliding scale (check one):

☐ \$0-20 (pay what you can) _____

☐ \$20-30 (suggested) _____

☐ \$30-100 _____

Send this form along with
your check to:

BBWN

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

diversity *diversity* diversity diversity...a beautiful word

Don't Assume Anything

by Amy Wyeth

A good deal of criticism has been written about heterosexuals who are surprised when they find out the true sexual orientation of someone who they didn't think "looked gay". These criticisms assert what is of course true — that there is no such thing as a gay or lesbian "look", since of course, everyone who is gay, lesbian or bisexual, looks that way.

Unfortunately, many of my experiences as a lesbian-identified bisexual woman have said to me that having an appearance or demeanor that diverges from the expected means I will not be accepted as truly belonging in the lesbian community. Despite my attendance at gay pride parades, dollars spent at gay resorts and in support of gay causes, and numerous attempts to participate in gay and/or lesbian groups and volunteer events, I have often felt unaccepted by this community.

It seems that there is little room for diversity from anyone's point of view in the black leather, short haircut lesbian image. On several occasions I feel that members of the gay community have assumed I was straight because I varied from this stereotypical look. Yet I like my looks and don't want to change them.

Still, it hurts when you are not accepted by a community you identify with and want to join. In the following situations, I am certain that my identity as expressed through my actions was disbelieved or questioned only because I had long hair, was wearing a skirt or not that much gay pride jewelry:

During a summer vacation I took in

Don't Assume continues on page 4

BBWN STEERING COMMITTEE FORMING

At the June 28 BBWN Planning Meeting, a decision was made to form an ongoing Steering Committee. **YOU** are invited to join. We will meet every other month. Our next meeting will be **AUGUST 22 at 7 p.m.** at the home of Robyn Ochs in Central Square, Cambridge. For information or directions, call Robyn at 576-1066 (before 10pm).

Interested in helping with the newsletter? This would be a great meeting to come to. The October/November issue will be on the agenda.

Newsweek Comes Out as Supportive

by Deborah Block-Schwenk

It's not every day you see someone reading an article on bisexuality on the T. I was intrigued (so was the guy standing over the reader, reading it backwards) — all I could see of the article from where I was were the large print excerpts:

Freud said we're all bi; he thought that exclusive heterosexuality was a 'problem'

That was great. On the next page was another quote:

To a social order based on monogamy, bisexuality looms a potent threat.

True, but.... What magazine was this in? Was this new or something she was researching? I was too far away to ask her; luckily as she flipped pages I caught a glimpse of the cover: Newsweek.

Later that day I looked for Newsweek in the CVS. There it was, the cover story of the July 17th issue — Bisexuality.

I approached the article with trepidation. I really don't know much about how "popular culture" views gays or bisexuals; I try to avoid

Newsweek continues on page 10

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Printed on
recycled paper

Volunteers of the Month



Heidi Friedman

Linda Blair

Ann Goglia

Wanda

Janna

Mary

Ellyn Ruthstrum

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Alison

Kate

Gail

Robyn Ochs

Laura Sachs

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Ellyn

Linda Blair

Kathleen Hepburn

Bi Office on the Move

In mid-August the Bisexual Resource Center (informally called the Bi Office and home of BBWN) will be moving to new offices at 25-33 Stanhope Street in Back Bay, just a few blocks from our present location. We need help with the actual moving and with a godzillion (OK, maybe not quite a godzillion) other details that don't necessarily require heavy lifting. The exact move-in date has not yet been set, but will likely be somewhere between 11 and 15 August. We need packers, unpackers, movers, folks to round up boxes and tape and so on, folks willing to haul stuff in their vehicles, deal with NYNEX, etc., etc. If lots of cute bisexuals pitch in, this'll be a piece of cake. Leave a message with your name, phone number (let us know if discretion is required), and what you'd be interested in helping out with on the office phone, 338-9595. Thanks!

BBWN Financial Statement, January 1, 1995 - June 30, 1995

Balance forward 1/1/95: 4322.44

<i>Expenses</i>	
Printing	1287.95
Postage	795.48
Advertising	87.50
Merchandise purchased	61.78
Postal fees	85.00
Pride expenses	163.68
Contribution toward office expenses	250.00

Total expenses 2731.39

<i>Income</i>	
Dues	1475.00
Advertising	200.00
Merchandise	132.52
Bank Interest	25.53

Total income: 1883.05

Balance as of 6/30/95: 3474.10

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the Oct./Nov. issue:

Networking

Many BiWomen readers are also activists in other groups. Let's tell each other about them!

Probable future themes:

Humor

Men

Racism

If you have ideas for themes, please write!

We welcome brainstorming. This is your newsletter. We don't have a staff of writers, just a handful of us who compile what you send us. So send us your ideas, essays, complaints, letters, art, poems.

"But I'm not really a part of the bi community, I just read the newsletter."

"But I haven't been out as bi for very long."

"But I'm not really a writer/artist/poet."

**YOU ARE BI WOMEN!!
YOUR VOICE IS THE MOST
IMPORTANT VOICE!!!!**

DEADLINE for the Oct./Nov. issue:

Friday, September 8, 1995

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (DOS or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

**BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140**

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 28, 1995 Present: Robyn, Ellyn, Kate, Deborah, Alison

The following was discussed and decided:

1) We will establish a more structured Steering Committee, to which people would make an ongoing commitment. We will meet bi-monthly, on even numbered months (so as not to conflict with Bi Women's production). Ellyn, Robyn, Deborah and Kate have agreed to be on the Steering Committee. We would like to have several other women on the committee, so please come to the August 22 meeting at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge. (Call 576-1066 before 10pm for directions.) At this meeting we will make more decisions about the role and structure of this Committee, the length of the commitment, etc.

2) Over the next several months, BBWN will host a series of workshops and presentations/discussions. Topics will include: Women's Sensuality, a Lesbian/Bi Women Dialogue, Storytelling: Love Stories, and presentations and discussions featuring authors from Closer to Home and other feminist bi books. Check the Bi Women Calendar for more info.

3) Debbie has agreed to put some attention to streamlining BBWN's process for responding to requests for information, and Debbie and Ellyn will handle mail and merchandise over the summer (THANKS!) We are looking for a good woman to make an ongoing commitment to handling BBWN's merchandise. Its a small time commitment, generally 1 hour or less per month. If you are interested, leave a message with your name and phone number on the info line (338-9595).

4) Report back from Pride: The BBWN dinner before the march was a big success. Fun was had, good food was eaten, and signs were made. Special thanks to Carla and Ellyn for their work in planning this dinner. The bi contingent at the pride march was probably our largest ever, with between 100 and 200 marchers.

5) We are looking for the BBWN banner, which has been missing since last years march. Please let one of us know if you have it. We miss it!

6) At the risk of being repetitive, put the August 22 meeting on your calendar! If you're interested in joining the Steering Committee but won't be in town on August 22, call 338-9595 and let us know.

Respectfully submitted, Robyn Ochs



Letters

Dear BiWomen,

I read with interest your call for submissions and am so newly identified as bisexual, and have so little contact with either the lesbian or bi communities, I feel I'm still at the reading and thinking and digesting rather than talking stage. I am however older, rural, and recently separated from a long term, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. This certainly makes me marginal in the bi community, but then, where is the center?

I also find there is so much energy here at the fringes of our culture that I gravitate, as if by centrifugal force, to the edges where I can more easily recognize some kind of authenticity, in myself and in my fellow travelers on the outside.

I am extremely interested in your diversity issue, however, since I'm currently editing a theatre resource guide, and we are working to include an expanded diversity section this time. In the past, this has dealt with mainly artists of color and/or with physical challenges — but I'm interested in how to address the glb community's unquestioned contribution to theatre. It seems the arts have traditionally been a welcome place for all sexual orientations, if not for other marginalized groups from the culture as a whole, so I welcome any consciousness-raising along these lines which your network might offer me. Do you have an arts person/contact in your group with whom I might correspond directly?

Thanks.

Peggy Roberts



Dear Boston BiWomen Newsletter Women,

I just received my newsletter in the mail. I started scanning it while eating my salad, waiting for the corn to cook, watching Star Trek, and listening to my phone messages! Ah, the life of an activist. I know you know what I mean. I also know that any of you who are, or who have been, mothers know what I mean, too.

So there I was, busy with multiple tasks. I looked over to page 2 to "Coming in BiWomen." I thought "Probable future theme: Humor, Networking and Men" was quirky, original, interesting and had a typo! What I read was — Humor(ous) Networking Men. I know a lot of these guys, I thought! I quickly imagined who would write about what, remembered stories that would be perfect, and planned to call some of my bi male friends and let them know they could contribute to *BiWomen*. Then I noticed it was "themes" not "theme"!

That's when I stopped everything, and turned on the computer to write you this letter. Thank you *all* for putting the time and energy into producing this beautiful newsletter. I am only on page 2 having a great time.

Bisexually yours,
Lani Ka'ahumanu

Ollie, ollie, in
come free!

Would the bodacious bi
who is holding the BBWN
banner please come
forward and name the
ransom amount?

Call the Bisexual
Resource Center at (617)
338-9595.



On-line Resources

News & Views, the
monthly publication of
the Triangle Community
Center of Norwalk, Con-
necticut, is available via
e-mail for free. Call (203)
849-1508 to subscribe.

UMass-Amherst GLB Alumni Association Reforming

We are trying to revive the UMass-Amherst GLB Alumni Association. This will allow alumni to stay in contact with one another, network, and keep in touch with the GLB community on campus. If you or someone you know is a GLB alum of UMass-Amherst, please send name, address, telephone, fax number, e-mail address, major, degree, and year of graduation to UMass GLB Alumni Association; c/o Program for GLB Concerns, Box 31799, Crampton House/SW, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

Don't Assume, from page 1

Provincetown, Mass., with my then-girlfriend, she was handed flyers advertising local lesbian clubs and events, while I — very clearly with her — was ignored by the people handing them out. At a cocktail party sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian student club at the university where I recently received my Master's degree, I was asked in public by the club president whether I was a lesbian. Finally, last fall I volunteered to serve at a dinner for people affected by HIV/AIDS. Since many of those serving and attending were gay or lesbian, I thought that no one would assume I wasn't, yet a conversation with a fellow volunteer quickly indicated to me that he incorrectly believed I knew nothing about local gay news, events or clubs.

People have suggested to me that I should have a sense of humor about these events. I will admit that there have been times, when talking with straight people, when I have been amused by conversations I have with people who would never give me the time of day if they knew everything about me. More often, though, I am frustrated by the damage that can be caused by assumptions to every party involved.

Yvonne Zipter, a columnist for the Chicago lesbian monthly *Outlines*, described in July 1994 the "angst" her partner expressed when she was not recognized as a lesbian by another lesbian and notes that this view of her was confirmed by

a gay male friend who told her partner that she (Yvonne) did not look "like a lesbian." Ms. Zipter's solution to not being recognized for who she is because she doesn't conform to a stereotype, is to vow to conform more. I think it is only fair that she should be accepted by her own community, but I believe that the solution she proposes doesn't go to the heart of the matter. That is, I believe some members of the gay community are guilty of stereotyping themselves and others into an image which not all of us fit, not recognizing that this is as harmful to some members of our community as are the actions of anyone who encourages the perpetuation of any false stereotypes about gays.

Two pins I wear on my backpack express very succinctly my own sentiments about smashing stereotypes and encouraging diversity. They say, "Don't Assume Anything" and "Question Authority." No one, including gays, bis and heterosexuals, should assume anything about someone's sexual preference based only on the way that person looks. *Everyone* should question the notions defined or perpetuated by those in positions of authority (e.g. the media, certain powerful icons/members of gay culture, and certain dangerous bigots) as to what a lesbian or bisexual woman looks like. Not all of us feel we are well represented by such narrow definitions. ▽



IBIS 96

4th INTERNATIONAL BISEXUAL SYMPOSIUM BERLIN 1996

WHITSUN - FRIDAY 24th TO MONDAY 27th MAY 1996

CALL FOR PAPERS, PRESENTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES

The German bisexual network BINE e.V. invites bisexual people around the world, their partners and friends and anyone favourably disposed towards bisexuality to hand in proposals for academic papers, literary presentations, artistic performances, films and suggestions for a wide variety of workshops to be held at the 4th International Bisexual Symposium.

The symposium's general motto is: DIVERSITY: THE MANY FACES OF BISEXUALITY

Papers will be grouped under the following headings:

BODY-SOUL-HISTORY-CULTURE-CONFLICT-COMMUNITY-BEAUTY

Conference languages will be German and English. We are also planning a panel in Turkish.

Proposals should be submitted no later than 30th September 1995.

Address: BINE e.V., Postfach 610214, D-10923 Berlin, Germany

Phone: Germany-30-694 46 51

Fax: Germany-30-211 74 05

email: gerhard@netmbx.netmbx.de

gerhard@afutub.extern.tu-berlin.de (only if netmbx fails)

"Women of the World" Unite!

If you're looking for a new way to learn more about the lives and experiences of women in other cultures, join the Women's International/Intercultural Group, also known as "Women of the World." The group meets monthly at the Women's Center in Cambridge, Mass. Past meetings have covered topics such as "A Cross-Cultural Look at Domestic Violence," "Experiences of Women Immigrants" and "Racism." The group will be gearing up for great new programs for September. For info call (617) 354-8807. ↙



Second in a series of three poems by Blanca C. Alcaraz.

2. (untitled)

My eyes are closed;
I see nothing
but the darkness that surrounds me —
You are before me, I feel you with my senses. Your body's
scent, how sweet it is, has permanently found itself
a home ... inside me,
making me delirious,
making me desire you,
Even more, I want you.

My hands reach out to touch you — feeling every part of you so that
when you are away from me, I can feel my hands, feeling
the traces imprinted upon them of you — I can feel you now,
You are with me.

My lips, my mouth, both like an impatient child, longing
eagerly to introduce your lips, your mouth to mine.
What will they say to each other if they were ever to meet? Perhaps
they (my lips, my mouth) would become the voice of my foolish
heart, whose staggering words are its strongest weakness.

Listen, if you can, to the voice of my silent heart,
expressing itself loudly through its actions — a famished
little boy.

My eyes take you in as I lose myself in yours — Why do they
swell with such a heavy mist that threatens to leave its trace
as it descends down my face, becoming the traitor of my soul —
Trying to understand this mist Eye Sea — Wading to
Understand — I don't.

My heart, the most foolish of them all, lacks all reason, all
logic, makes no sense of right or wrong — much like when it
attempts to speak, words are always failing; failing me. Let
me love you. ↙

Edith

by Kathleen Hepburn

"COMING OUT"



My dad's sort of a creepy guy, but
when I told him, he hugged me.
That was cool.



When I told my mom, she said,
"Well, you never were very frilly."
Good ol' mom.



My buddy Rob said, "Great! It's
always a great thing when people
learn more about themselves."
Pretty amazing.



So what happened when
I first told myself?
I cried.
Go figure.





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Hidden Diversity

by Helene Newberg

Imagine yourself reporting to a new job on a Monday morning, taking your place on a hand-picked team of top-shelf technical whiz-kids, expected to form a tightly-knit whiz kid machine, and finding yourself in the middle of a group of people who, in certain visible—and not so visible—ways, are nearly identical to each other and exactly opposite to yourself.

I found myself in this situation a few years ago, and I use it in talks I give to illustrate what a "non-Diverse" workplace looks like. It wasn't non-Diverse merely because the group was 99% male; that's sort of expected in a technical field.

The non-Diverse part I'm talking about happened at lunch during the first day of training, when our new supervisor went around the table establishing the marital status of each of my colleagues: "You've been married for 3 years... You're getting married in a year and a half... You've just gotten engaged... You and your wife have how many children? ... You're going to which Club Med for your honeymoon?" And so on, each of the 11 in turn, until I, totally out in general but not sure how out I could be in the new workgroup without threatening these new work relationships, was trying to turn as gray as the wall and disappear.

I am out at work to anyone who cares to know, but I never know what the next person/group of people knows about me and of course I don't know how they'll react when they find out. My thoughts, as my new supervisor went around that table, were not really on sharing my new colleagues' collective happiness. I was more worried about what I should say when it got to be my turn. And then I worried that coming out rather aggressively would ruin any chance I had of establishing solid working relationships with the guys in the group. I don't remember what I said, I

think she skipped over me, but my thoughts that afternoon were not on the training. Instead I kept replaying that scene, wondering what I should have said and getting kind of angry about the whole situation.

Two points arise from this anecdote: 1) When people in an organization ask me how they can make space safer for those different from themselves, I explain that they can start by not assuming anything about core, but hidden, identities. If my boss had used words like "partner," "relationship," or "spouse," I'm certain I would have felt welcome to disclose the status of my relationship with my female partner and therefore would have thoroughly enjoyed lunch and contributed to the afternoon of training. 2) When someone not in the apparent majority group in an organization experiences language or behavior which excludes or denigrates them, that person will lose some amount of productivity for some amount of time.

If I have to pay attention to my safety, or barriers to my success, in an organization, my attention span for positive contribution to that organization shortens considerably. In a business, this diversion directly affects the bottom line. I lost that afternoon of training, though I had fewer of these experiences as I made sure I was out and established myself with the group (and the supervisor)...

I'm fortunate that non-hetero orientations are respected, for the most part, at my workplace, and so don't have to undergo those kinds of moments frequently. For someone in a less-safe environment, or for someone visibly different from the straight white male mainstream of both my profession and the management in my profession, these kinds of experiences take a serious toll on individual productivity, retention, as well as group productivity.

If my company let it be known, from the top-down, that gay jokes were an acceptable part of the corporate culture, perhaps my coming out would have destroyed my working relationships, banging me at full speed into the lavender ceiling when my contributions were not enhanced or encouraged by the rest of my team.

There's a cute little anecdote that floats around email every few years which illustrates the brilliance generated from being able to keep a diverse group of people around and encouraging them to work together. It's about a company up somewhere with bad winters which needs to keep power or phone lines free of ice. Historically, they sent workers up the poles, in full ice-

Hidden Diversity *continues on next page*

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Hidden Diversity, from preceding page

climbing gear to shake the ice free, which proved too great a risk. The company set up task forces to study the problem, and at first they threw together management teams. The management teams, all from mostly the same background, weren't able to propose a workable solution. After several of these meetings, the company brought in a consultant, who immediately put together a group consisting of administrative people, line workers, and managers. The conversation wound around, with someone suggesting that they get bears up the poles, because bears would be heavy enough to shake the ice from the lines. How to get the bears up there? Place pots of honey. How to get the honey pots up there, besides continuing to have workers climbing poles? A retired Armed Forces helicopter pilot suggested using helicopters, leading to the eventual solution of simply flying helicopters low enough over the lines to use the winds generated from the helicopter blade to blow the ice off the lines.

Granted, this anecdote is but one data point. Because people from different levels of the organization, from different backgrounds, were encouraged to bring all of themselves and their experiences to the table, they were able to create an elegant solution to a very expensive problem.

Those responsible for a workgroup or organization must insure that the space is equally accessible for all constituents or employees in order to maximize the potential contribution from each person. People who don't feel that their contributions are appreciated, or who are blocked from contributing, either stay in the organization and don't produce or leave. Both alternatives carry a high price for the individual and the organization.

I work hard at expanding people's comfort zones around difference. I am a person of difference, in many dimensions, and consider this work germane to my own survival. I facilitate Diversity Awareness Sessions and speak as a member of a Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual speaker's bureau. I have been involved in Diversity efforts since starting an organization while in college 7 years ago. Just because I wear the cape does not mean that I think I have no work left to do around difference. I work alongside the participants in my sessions. ▼



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Here I Am

by Laura Perez

last summer
i left "the town"
i left Boston
Beantown

a Bi Girl
on her way
to Queer Mecca - NOT!
a new home
a new job
more friends
another community.

i'm not leaving
Boston, i said
as much as i am
going to San Francisco.

i'm going home
my other home, that is
since i left
my heart in Boston.

living *en la Mision*
The Mission
has noticeably
changed my life.

The Mission filled
with *mis hermanas*
y mis hermanos
my Latina sisters and Latin
brothers
and the others in between,
neither/nor, both/and
Latinas fuck with gender, too.

the sounds and smells
of my neighborhood
Mexicano, Salvadoreño
Peruano
may be foreign to those
who dwell in the Castro
(all of six blocks away)
but not to me.

The Castro filled
with the fags
and the dykes

my queer brothers and sisters
and the bisexuals, of course
neither/nor, both/and
Queers fuck with gender all
the time.

The sounds and smells
of this neighborhood
tricks, junkies and guppies
may be foreign to those in
The Mission
(directly adjacent)
but not to me - sometimes.

i said goodbye
to the Hancock and the Pru
because i had to be
true to myself
my Latina bi queer
self.

my love for you
and for this work
made me a seasoned activist
dish.
i went west so as to not
overdo this fine home-cooked
meal.

when it began to sting
a little too hard
a little too long
to be the only one
the sometimes Spanish-
speaking
brown, almond-eyed
darker-skinned woman
from a country far, far away
i knew my long-awaited
journey was at hand

the other city by the Bay
San Francisco
held seductive promises;
i just had to take her up on
them.

to be Latino and queer in the
Bay Area
is no novelty.
to be Latina and bisexual
is not common yet not rare.

my first week
in my new home
i headed north to
a sex-positive retreat

for *Latina lesbianas y*
Latina bisexuales.
i didn't have sex
though i helped organize it -
almost the same thing.

my first week
on this Pacific Coast
Peninsula
during a safer sex demo
at a women's college
i met a woman who
volunteered to pack.
i used my mouth
to go down on her
dildo with a condom
she gave me her number
i'm still chasing after her.

the discoveries i've made
living in *La Mision* and
loving the Castro
in San Francisco and Boston
and being Latina and
bisexual
are the differences which
appear
miles apart
and are, in fact,
close enough
to touch.

although i wanted to
i never lived in the South End
with *mifamilia*
puertorriqueña
perhaps i wouldn't have fit.
Boston held open this
bulky pocket to me.
It remained empty.

Boston held tighter to its
pocket of queer community.
there are times when i think
i'm glad that
perhaps i wouldn't have fit.
The politics of power
are not unique
to Beantown.

being "the" bi Latina
was "nice" for a while
until i didn't want
to be "the bi Latina"
anymore.



the differences
between
San Francisco and Boston
queer politics
are just degrees
of power-plays.

this so-called gap between my
cultural ancestry and
my ways of loving?
Nonexistent.

i know
bisexuality and polyamory
runs through the blood in my
veins
as it did many, many years
ago
in the bodies and souls of my
antepasados Incas.
My Incan ancestors
celebrated
their (bi) love openly.

i had to dig deep to find
the truth about myself
my roots and my dreams.
now, i say to you
dig deep
know the truth of
your roots and
your dreams
you will not
you cannot fail.

we dream a world
which bridges the barriers.
i, this
bi-coastal, bisexual
dyke of color
have living proof
the distance is
not so great.

Marginalization at the Northeast Conference on Bisexuality

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

When Anthony Meyers took the floor at the closing session of the Northeast Regional Conference on Bisexuality, he cited his experience from the day before of leading a workshop about the intersections of race, gender and sexuality politics with only other person of color in the room with him. He bravely pointed out to an overwhelmingly white audience that bis need to be concerned about this lack of racial diversity and need to work to stop it from occurring at queer community events.

Anthony's personal and sensitive critique demonstrated he cared enough about the conference to encourage future organizers, workshop leaders and participants to outreach to bis of color and set diversity within our community as a priority. We know we are diverse. We know we are in *all* communities. As we become more visible as bis, however, we need to be sure we are not presenting a "whitewashed" face as the only face that is seen.

When we organize and when we program within our community, we need to be much more conscious of how we do our outreach and who sits around the table to do the planning. Questions to keep in mind as we go along may include: Are we programming with people of color in mind? Who speaks at our events? Where are we holding events? Do we have a mailing list that reaches into diverse communities of color?

There was pain within Anthony's words when he expressed his feelings of marginalization at the conference. I know that when I seek queer community I certainly do not want to feel marginalized once again. Let's challenge ourselves to build a space where all bis can feel visible, heard and accepted when gather together. ▼



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Robyn Ochs, editor

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Call To Artists

The Healing & Arts Studio is holding its 2nd Annual "Survivor Pride" Art Exhibit and Open Gallery on September 23 & 24. If you are a survivor interested in exhibiting your art or craft work in this exhibit (which may or may not include powerful and graphic expressions of abuse, survivorship and healing), you must preregister before September 2. To register call Elizabeth at (617) 859-9561 Tues. & Thurs. 2-8pm, Sat 12-5pm. Please have the following info ready when you call: name, address, ph #, type and number of pieces you wish to exhibit, dimensions of each piece and display requirements.

Newsweek, from page 1

popular culture as much as possible. Within days of Jesse Helms' vile remarks about people with AIDS, what could one expect?

I can say with relief and pride that I was impressed with the fairness and depth of the article. It presented bisexuals as individuals with unique choices and histories; it presented bisexuality as both a theory about human sexuality and a philosophy that challenges current notions of sexuality and gender. Bisexuality, the article said pointedly, "is what disappears when we divide desire into gay and straight, just as millions of Americans of various ethnic origins disappear when we discuss race in terms of black and white." With this attitude of inclusiveness — even saying at one point "More and more of *us*...move comfortably between gay and straight worlds," (emphasis added) — the article touched on virtually every aspect of bisexuality in a straightforward way.

The *Newsweek* staff did a great job of presenting the diversity of bisexuals — their portrayals included African-Americans, Latinos and Latinas, a bi man from a working class background, as well as white progressives. Some were in monogamous couples, some in actively non-monogamous relationships, and some apparently in no current relationships at all. They also gave celebrity examples, not just contemporary ones like Michael Stipe and Sandra Bernhard, but classic stars like James Dean, Cary Grant, and Marlene Dietrich. "Many of the men who have taught us to be men...and the women who have taught us to be women...enjoyed sex with both men and women," the article reads, adding a subversive footnote to America's obsession with image.

In the discussions of the origins and meaning of bisexuality, the article presented a variety of viewpoints and few clear answers, but a lot of questions and ideas which should challenge the non-bi-identified reader. Is bisexuality a genetic inheritance, as one researcher believes? Or is it a universal trait built into the human species, as Freud believed and many other sex researchers believe? Is it a trait in itself or is it, as sex researcher Martin Weinberg puts it, a matter of "failing to unlearn the desirable aspects of one's own gender"? Is bisexuality even about gender at all? "I don't desire a gender, I desire a person," 25 year-old Matthew Ehrlich says. The definition of bisexual was also left unclear; making it even more individualized:

At bottom, though, bisexuality simply does not reduce neatly....Bisexuality is less a root than a construction — different in each individual — of passions and actions we are accustomed to calling heterosexual or homosexual. In its ambiguities, it calls

into question the certainties of both gay and straight. Pushed far enough, it absorbs both.

The article did not neglect the history of prejudice — from both straights and gays — that bisexuals have experienced. Bisexuality has been avoided and ignored by our culture; the article cited most recently that in speculation around Jann Wenner, the Rolling Stone publisher who left his wife for a man, "bisexuality was the possibility missing from most accounts." Bisexuality has even been written out of most sex surveys.

Melissa Merry, a 31-year-old bi woman, speaks in the article of the prejudice within the lesbian community in the late eighties when she came out, and the tremendous positive changes that have occurred within the gay and lesbian community. Both the gay and feminist movements are credited with creating a more open atmosphere toward same-gender attraction today, especially on college campuses. However, Luis, a 36-year-old bi man, finds himself the target of anti-gay slurs when shopping with his male lover. Psychologist William Wedin of the Bisexual Information and Counseling Service acknowledges that "most of the bisexuals he sees would rather remain in the closet," some of them having one group of gay friends and another group of straight friends, creating two separate and disjointed lives. The article also gently debunked the fear that bi men bring AIDS into the heterosexual community, quoting Center for Disease Control estimates that at most 20 percent of women who contract AIDS sexually get it from bi men (the remainder get it from drug users). Still, I don't think that enough emphasis was placed on the role of unsafe sex, and in the fact that intolerance may lead bi men to be dishonest with (female) partners.

My only concern about the article (and it is personal, based somewhat on my anything-but-promiscuous life) is that in its level of honesty and complexity it may frighten too many people. True the article states, "promiscuity is not an article of faith for all bisexuals; it is an option," but some people will skim over that part while absorbing tales of couples with multiple partners, "body-fluid monogamy" and gender-bending lifestyles. These people are real, and they are true to themselves, but will this information contribute to the conservative backlash on-going in this country? Or will it revolutionize the way millions of *Newsweek* readers think about gender and sexuality?

I hope it will be the latter, and I sincerely believe that this was the response the writers of the article primarily intended. May it be only the first of many provocative pieces to familiarize American mainstream culture with all that it means — and all that it does not necessarily mean — to be bisexual. ▽



The following book has just been published, and contains a large number of articles by bisexual people, and discussion of bisexuality and non-monogamy. A web page for it can be accessed at:

<http://theory.doc.ic.ac.uk/~kcl/bbd.html> or

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UK: Normal price UK Pounds 5.99. Post free. Send cheque to Five Leaves Publications at the above address. Available from alternative and lesbian/gay bookshops. Distributor: Central Books.

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Bi Down Under

The Australian Bisexual Network has been working on the Down Under Project since October 1993. The Project's goal is to publish Australia's first bisexual anthology and is accepting submissions until October 1995. Bisexual women and men, their partners, parents or siblings who reside or resided in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea or Norfolk Island are encouraged to contribute personal stories, histories, poetry and drawings. Send to: Down Under Project, P.O. Box 490, Lutwyche, Queensland, Australia 4030.

Happy Bi Birthday!

BBWN wishes the Wellington (New Zealand) Bisexual Women's Group a Happy 7th Birthday.



And many, many more! BBWN has an exchange of newsletters with the group and has copies of *Bi-lines* in the office. If you want one of your very own, the address is: P.O. Box 5145, Wellington, New Zealand.

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Lavender Linings in GLIB's Loss

An Interview with Cathleen Finn of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston

by Linda Blair

As most of us have probably heard by now, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in June that the Allied War Veterans of Boston may legally exclude the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Irish Group of Boston (GLIB) from its annual St. Patrick's Day parade. BiWomen readers have likely followed the issue for four years now, through nine legal victories at the state level, including the State Supreme Court, all forcing the veterans to allow GLIB to march in the parade.

Although on the surface the Supreme Court's decision may feel devastating for the lesbian, bi, and gay movement, a closer look reveals a "lavender lining" or two in this cloud. First of all, the justices, although unanimous in their opposition to GLIB's position, did treat GLIB and the issues of les/bi/gay equality and liberation with a fair amount of respect in their written decision. (They even included the word "bisexual" in it a few times!) There's a big contrast between this and the language of their last decision on gay issues in the 80s.

Secondly, they upheld the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Law of Massachusetts as perfectly legal and sound legislation which protects people from discrimination based on sexual orientation in cases of "public accommodation." This means that the Massachusetts law which essentially made the whole case possible remains completely intact.

The decision basically states that parades in general, and this parade in particular, are not "public accommodations," but private events that the organizers of can decide who they will and will not allow to participate in. The veterans claimed GLIB's political/sexual "message" was stepping all over their "traditional family values" type message. GLIB claimed they had no message at all, just that its members are proud Irish Americans who want to celebrate their heritage by marching in their city's St. Patrick's Day Parade. The justices did imply that GLIB could have its own parade if it didn't like being excluded from the city-wide one, which sounds a lot like "separate but equal" if you happen to be the ones on the outside looking in.

Recently, BiWomen interviewed BBWN member Cathleen Finn, who, as the primary media spokesperson for GLIB, has been on the front lines of this battle since 1992. What follows are some of her thoughts, feelings and experiences of those four long years.

BiWomen: *Ultimately, you've lost in the courts, but what do you feel you've accomplished by challenging GLIB's exclusion from the parade?*

Cathleen: Well, we've certainly made people much more aware of the discrimination that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals still face. In '92 and '93, the bigotry we faced was a real eye opener. I think a lot of people, both within the Les/bi/gay community and outside of it were greatly surprised to see that even in this relatively enlightened and liberal area of the country, we still faced this much hostility. The petty attitudes that still persist and the fact that we're still not welcome to march in Boston have also shown the public how much discrimination we still experience.

The veterans can no longer accept public funds for the parade, so at least I know that my tax dollars are not being spent on a discriminatory event. The existence and warmth of the Cambridge St. Patrick's Day Parade is also a direct and major gain of our efforts. In '93 (the second year that under court order GLIB marched in Boston's parade) a lot more people were supportive. Then in '95, at the first annual all-inclusive parade in Cambridge, it seemed that people felt personally responsible to welcome us. Without everything that happened from '92-'94, they wouldn't have felt connected to us in that way.

Our challenge also created a very concrete and visible method to compare what politicians say on Les/bi/gay issues with what they actually do. Although creating this "litmus test" was never GLIB's

GLIB continues on next page

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GLIB, from preceding page

objective, it has been a by-product of our struggle and I hope the Les/bi/gay community will hold those that have not been with us on this accountable for their actions.

BiWomen: How has the whole process affected you personally, positively and/or negatively? Do you have any personal anecdotes you'd like to share with us?

Cathleen: I came out to my parents in order to assume the role of media spokesperson. My parents, both born in Ireland, have come a long way since then. My father told me he was sorry to hear about the (Supreme Court) decision and earlier this year my mother referred to the veterans (group of Boston) as "a bunch of old fogies."

So many people have been deeply and personally affected. I remember Barbara Kay saying to us in '92 that this was history in the making, and it was. GLIB was the first group to march in any St. Patrick's Day Parade as a group of openly gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

A lot of people in their 20's wrote out their wills before marching that day. One woman who marched had the past experience of witnessing her lover stoned to death, but was determined to march despite her fear.

There's so many examples of how important it is to fight back. One friend in particular was very adamant about marching in '92. Brian was very public about the fact that he was fighting AIDS, and his family had largely abandoned him. GLIB members had become his family by then and took care of him towards the end. A lot of people say we should wait until the powers that be want to include us, but Brian couldn't wait. 1992 was his year, his only chance to march. He died in 1993.

This struggle has been a year-round commitment for me and consumed a lot of my personal energy. At times it's been exhilarating and rewarding and at other times extremely painful. I've learned a lot about politics and the media, and I've learned that it doesn't take that many people to change things. As important as it's been to me, though, I'm ready for a break and to get my life back.

BiWomen: You work at Lotus Development Corporation, a pretty queer-friendly place. Have you gotten a lot of support there? What about from other places outside the lesbian, gay and bi communities?

I've always gotten a lot of flexibility at Lotus to take time off to deal with GLIB matters and, while I'm sure not everyone here agrees with what we've done, I sense that a lot of people respect me for taking a stand for what I believe in.

Often, people from work will mention that they saw me on TV. I'm surprised how much people notice and are impressed by that.

PFLAG has been wonderful. There's also a family in South Boston who I've been in contact with since '93 very in favor of our efforts. They're a young married couple with a small son. They've done things like written to the Boston Globe saying they don't want their son to see a parade that excludes people and think that all the people against GLIB aren't typical of South Boston residents.

Also, the level of commitment that our attorneys have shown, Mary Bonauto's in particular (the Civil Rights Director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders), has been inspiring to me.

BiWomen: Having attended the press conference after the Supreme Court decision, it felt extremely important to me to both that GLIB's name is inclusive of Bisexuals and to hear you identify yourself as a bisexual woman and speak from your experience as such. Was wanting GLIB's public image and voice to be bi inclusive at all a motivating factor for getting involved in the media work? Do you think the public has become more aware that this is a bisexual issue, not just a "gay issue," because of your involvement?

Cathleen: Yes to both questions. That GLIB was bi inclusive from its inception made me more willing to invest my time and energy into it, because I knew I'd have more of a say in the running of the group.

Having a bi spokesperson does make a difference in terms of bi visibility and I think I've helped raise people's awareness level in GLIB and in the lesbian and gay communities.

One of the most painful things about this year was the way my inclusive language and com-

GLIB continues on next page



CINCINNATI (Reuter)

July 14, 1995 - An Ohio

judge has sentenced a man accused of domestic violence to marry the woman he allegedly attacked. "I believe the bonds of marriage might make an abuser think a little bit more before resorting to physical force," Hamilton County Municipal Judge Albert

Mestemaker said. "I believe strongly in family values." Mestemaker sentenced Scott Hancock, 26, of Addyston, Ohio, to nine months' probation on the condition he marry his girlfriend, with whom he reportedly lives. Hancock pleaded no contest to a domestic violence charge. The judge said he believes domestic violence is less likely to occur between married couples than between unmarried couples living together.

Mestemaker also ordered the man to support the couple's child, seek family counseling and enter an alcohol treatment program. All but \$100 of a \$1,000 fine was suspended.

Speak Out!

Write to your newsletter!

Send us your letters, poetry, opinions, questions, essays, art, jokes, praise, criticism, news clippings...



BiWomen

BBWN

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA

02140

BUTTONS

Bisexual Pride
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Bisexual Queer



on sale at the Bi Office.

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plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 50¢ postage and handling) to:

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

GLIB, from preceding page

ments often have not shown up in the coverage I get. It's always disheartening to be subject to what I believe is censorship, but I put less weight on it when it happens in the mainstream media. It hurts a lot more when it comes from the gay and lesbian press.

One recent example was in the March issue of *Off Our Backs*. Even though I identify as bisexual in the interview itself, the table of contents read "interview with an Irish lesbian." What's hypocritical is that it's the same gay men and lesbians who might write an editorial saying that bisexuals aren't doing enough in the overall movement for equal rights that will censor me.

Then as bisexuals we sometimes sell ourselves short. A bi friend of mine from San Francisco read another article and commented that she didn't think I would have not used inclusive language or come out as bi in the interview, but as a reader outside the process, she couldn't know.

We shouldn't assume that people aren't bi just because they aren't identified as such. Nor should we assume that if people aren't identified as bi, either in the media or historically (for example, I'm sure there were bisexuals at the Stonewall Riot), we shouldn't assume that they aren't identified that way because they aren't or weren't strong enough or committed enough to do so. Thinking that way just contributes to the myth [that we don't exist]. When someone identifies as bi and it's censored,

it's part of this insidious process. Someone else has their own agenda and is withholding that information to further it.

BiWomen: For most of us, the parade is the only context in which we've heard about GLIB. Would you like to tell us a bit more about the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Irish Group of Boston?

Cathleen: It's mostly a social organization, although the parade has put such a strain on us, it's been very hard to keep the social aspect of it going. When you're discriminated against over many years like we have been, it's hard to keep people involved and energized.

GLIB was formed to make the connections between ethnicity and sexual orientation. The gay, lesbian, and bi community have formerly been viewed in a very homogenized way. So GLIB provides a vital social support structure, a place to belong in the larger les/bi/gay community where you don't have to "check your ethnicity at the door." It's here to let the Irish community know there's a lesbian, gay, bi community out there and the les/bi/gay community know there's an Irish community out there.

Linda Blair is co-editor of *BiWomen and Development Associate at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders*, a non-profit law firm that works against discrimination based on sexual orientation and HIV status throughout New England which has represented GLIB since 1992. She is of Irish and French Canadian heritage.

BI BABES ON BIKES

This September, we (along with over 3000 other riders) will set out on a three-day adventure that will change ours and over a million other lives. We will be riding our bikes from Boston to New York City, over 270 miles, to celebrate the lives of all of our friends, families, strangers, and angels who struggled and are struggling with AIDS/HIV.

We've agreed to raise at least \$2,400 in pledges, between now and September, with all of our proceeds benefiting the Fenway Community Health Center, New England's largest community-based provider of AIDS/HIV services and research. We're training as hard as we can for what seems like an impossible ride...we need your help in the fund-raising. Any support is appreciated. This is not only a great cause...it's touched our lives.

Thank you ahead of time..... Carla and Megan

** pls make checks payable to Boston-NY AIDS Ride and send to:

Carla Imperial and Megan Jewett

54 Linnaean St Box 525

Cambridge, MA 02138-1598

Call (617) 732-4012 x3950 or (617) 572-7843 for more info.



QUEER JOURNALISTS GATHER

The annual conference of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) is being held October 19-22, 1995, in Washington, D.C. With over 1,000 member journalists, the conference will have programs and workshops focus in various aspects of newspaper, magazine, radio and television journalism, as well as photojournalism.

There will also be a Capitol Hill reception with members of Congress, a gala reception at the National Press Club, and a job fair with representatives from newspaper and broadcast organizations from around the country.

For registration information, call (301) 585-5545.

CALENDAR, from page 12

September 13 • Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

September 16 • Saturday

Bi Brunch. Dim Sum at the China Pearl, 9 Tyler Street. 11am. Closest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

September 17 • Sunday



BBWN Potluck Brunch at Laura's house in Allston (in the Zoom! zip code: "0-2-1-3-4"). Noon. Central air conditioning at no extra cost! These

BBWN potluck brunches are always a pleasure. Call for (617) 338-9595 for directions (leave a message, indicate if discretion is necessary).

September 19 • Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 2.

September 23 • Saturday

Another outing to Singing Beach in Manchester-by-the-Sea. Meet at North Station commuter rail platform at noon to catch 12:15 train.



September 23 & 24 • Saturday - Sunday

The Healing & Arts Studio is holding its 2nd annual "Survivor Pride" Art Exhibit and Open Gallery. 731 Harrison Ave., Boston. Call (617) 859-9561 for info or to ask about exhibiting your work.

September 24 • Sunday

Bi Brunch at Buddha's Delight in Chinatown. 1:30pm. Closest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.



September 26 • Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. As always, share stories, meet other bi women, help get the newsletter out. The more who show up the faster it goes! 7-9pm at the new Bi Office.

September 30 • Saturday

Randolph Country Club outing - meet at noon in front of the new Bi Office behind Club Café on Stanhope St. (by Back Bay on the Orange Line or Arlington on the Green Line).

October 1 • Sunday

Bi Space. See August 6.

October 4 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 2.



Looking Queer

The editor of *LOOKING QUEER: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgendered Communities* is seeking articles from lesbians and bi women of color and transgendered people. Official deadline has passed, but submissions are still being sought; query first. Suggested word length for articles and non-fiction narratives is 700-5,000 words. Longer submissions and research papers should be queried. Submissions and/or queries should be sent to: Dawn Atkins, P.O. Box 861, Iowa City, IA 52244-0861 or datkins@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu. All submissions and queries should include self-addressed, stamped envelope for response.

- * Please include a one paragraph biographical statement, including your current academic status (ie. junior, senior, 1993 graduate...) and college/university attended.
- * In your story, please respect the privacy of others. Be sure that you have people's permission to use their real names or to include descriptions of places/events which may compromise their privacy. Otherwise, use pseudonyms.
- * Please indicate if your story has been previously published.
- * Please include two copies of your story and two self-addressed stamped envelopes. If possible, please also include your story on a Macintosh-compatible disk. ↴

AIDS Bike Ride needs volunteers

The Boston to New York AIDS Ride (Presented by Tanqueray) needs volunteers on ANY of the following days: Wednesday, Thursday, and/or Friday, September 13, 14, and 15. As a volunteer you will be a part of an event raising over \$1,000,000 for AIDS services at Fenway Community Health Center, the largest community based AIDS Health Services provider in New England.



We need over 500 volunteers to prepare the World Trade Center Boston for the arrival and departure of over 3000 committed bicycle riders.

We guarantee that you will work hard the entire time you are with us. You will meet others like yourself, who are committed to working as a team, to solving seemingly unsolvable problems and to achieving a level of service rarely seen in our world today. In the end, you will see that a small group of individuals can really change the world.

Volunteers are needed to set up, tear down, meet and greet, attend to 40 to 50 booths and several office areas, provide security, act as runners and more.

The success of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, September 13, 14, and 15 (and ultimately, the success of the Ride) will depend on the help of many, many volunteers.

- If you can help any or all of the days, WE NEED YOU!
- If you can help 4 or more hours, WE NEED YOU!
- If your corporation or employer can supply a team of volunteers, WE NEED THEM!

Please call the Set Up/CheckIn Volunteer Hotline (617)450-8738. Leave a message which includes your name, mailing address, and telephone number and you will receive a volunteer registration form.

Thank you for volunteering.

Bruce Huie, Chair, Set Up/CheckIn Committee
Rebecca Gaiser, Boston to New York AIDS Ride

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. On August 15, 1995, we will be moving to 29-33 Stanhope Street (basically across the street.) Make a note of it, and come visit (see page 2 for some words about the move).

(617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

L/G/B Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals.

Concert band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

August 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

August 6 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

August 8-13 ♦ Tuesday - Sunday

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. A camping village on 600 acres of forest. Over 300 workshops are scheduled over the week, along with film tents, concerts tents, writing tents, and spirituality tents. Info: PO Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

August 12 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Beach Day! What's summer without a day at the beach? Come play in the waves at Singing Beach with us. Meet on the Commuter Rail platform of North Station at 9:45 am. We'll take the 10:15am Rockport/Ipswich train to Manchester-by-the-Sea, then walk together to the beach. The train ticket is \$3.50 each way, but if there's more than 10 of us, we can get a discount. Rain date will be Sunday, August 13. Call Linda at 282-3537 for more info.



August 13 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Excursion to Walden Pond. Meet (with car if you have one) at Alewife T station. We'll meet at the Burger King in the T station by 8:30 AM. We need to meet by 8:30 to make sure we can get parking at the pond.

Dancing at Ryle's! Hot, sweaty women, great music, \$3 cover. How can you go wrong? Dance with other BBWN women tonight and every 2nd Sunday of the month. 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. Tea dance is 5-10pm, but the "fashionably late" majority generally arrive around 7:30-8:00pm.

August 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 2.

August 19 ♦ Saturday

Bi Brunch at Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square. Nearest (extremely near) T stop is Harvard Square on the Red line. All welcome. Just show up.

August 20 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Outing to Singing Beach in Manchester-by-the-Sea. Meet at North Station commuter rail platform at noon to catch 12:15 train.

August 22 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Steering Committee Meeting. YOU are invited to join! Help us plan exciting events, as well as plan the newsletter. We will meet every other month. This meeting will be 7-10pm at the home of Robyn Ochs. For information and directions, call Robyn at (617) 576-1066 (before 10pm). All women welcome!

August 25-27 ♦ Friday-Sunday Bi Camp.

August 27 ♦ Sunday

Bi Brunch. 1:30pm. For those who can't be at Bi Camp, Bi Brunch will be at Botolph's at 569 Tremont St. Closest T station is Back Bay on the Orange line; walk down Clarendon to Tremont and turn right.

September 1 - 3 ♦ Friday - Sunday

UK's National Bisexual Conference, University of Central England, Birmingham. Open to bisexuals, their friends, partners and anyone who feels allied to the bisexual community. Non-UK residents welcome. Inquiries by e-mail to: BiCon@bham.ac.uk.



September 3 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See August 6.

September 4 ♦ Monday (Labor Day)

Biversity Potluck picnic by the Victory Gardens in the Fenway, corner of Park Dr. and Boylston. 12 noon. Kenmore on the Green Lines (B, C, and D) is the closest T stop.

September 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 2.

September 8 ♦ Friday

Shabbat dinner at Sharon's. Call 497-7646 for info and directions.

BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: **Networking** (see page 2). Submissions on all subjects welcome, as always. Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, whatever, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

September 11 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night at the new Bi Office at 29 Stanhope Street. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us! Call Kathleen (before Monday) for more info (617) 825-2333.



CALENDAR continues on page 15

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

RANDOM MUSINGS ON THE CONCEPT OF NETWORKING

by Robyn Ochs

I tried to look up the word "networking" in my 1970's Merriam Webster paperback dictionary, and found that there was no listing. I guess that means that the word has come of age sometime in the last 15 years. It also means that its time I went out and bought myself a new dictionary. Sitting here at my home computer, I decided to try looking in my computer's thesaurus. It also rejected the word networking, recommending that I use network instead. A few of the synonyms it came up with were web, circuitry, tangle, puzzle, system.

So what DOES the word networking mean? What do I mean when I use this word?

When I am networking I am the thread drawing two or more different things into some sort of relationship; I am building alliances or connections.

Sometimes I feel like that: a walking needle and thread, or a walking glue stick: pulling people and things together, trying to foster dialogue, encouraging connections.

Sometimes I get to do this in a formal and structured way: I facilitate inter-group dialogues, such as "Lesbians & Bisexual Women: A Dialogue", or "Bring Your Own Straight Friend (BYOSF): A Dialogue Across Difference". Men and women; lesbians and bi women; bi men and bi women; gay men and lesbians; straight folks and the rest of us. I try to get us all together, in one room, talking about our fears and hopes, encouraging us to move toward a place where we are able to hear each other more clearly, where we can understand that we are ALL afraid of being rejected, of not being appreciated or valued, of not being heard.

Facilitating workshops is one formal way by which I create connections. Sometimes I do this simply by being myself, an out bisexual woman, in a group that is primarily NOT bisexual. Being an out bisexual in my primarily heterosexual work environment, being an out, comfortable, committed and decisive bisexual in a group like the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Speakers Bureau, or the Cambridge Lavender Alliance. I am building connections simply by

Networking continues on page 4

What we did on our Summer Vacation



From left to right, BBWN members Robyn, Carla, Megan, Irene and Alix took a day out to enjoy a hike around Walden Pond in Concord, MA.

Steering Committee Meeting

August 22, 1995

Attendees: Kathleen, Ananda, Ellyn, Ann, Debbie, Irene, Fennel, Laura, Deborah, Julie, Kate, Linda, Katherine, Robyn

Fourteen eager women crowded Robyn Ochs' living room to organize the new BBWN steering committee and formulate a structural plan of action. Robyn spoke about the uneven history of the group and the present need for more structure and organization, as well as more solid commitments from BBWN members to keep in place all the little pieces that needed to be done. Ann and Irene commented on the structural history of BBWN, saying that while steering committees and

Meeting continues on page 3

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Printed on recycled paper

Volunteers of the Month



Linda Blair

Gail

Holly

Kate



Ellyn Ruthstrom

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Deboran Levine

Katharine Douthit

Stephanie

Robyn Ochs

Laura Sachs

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (DOS or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the Dec./Jan. issue:

Humor

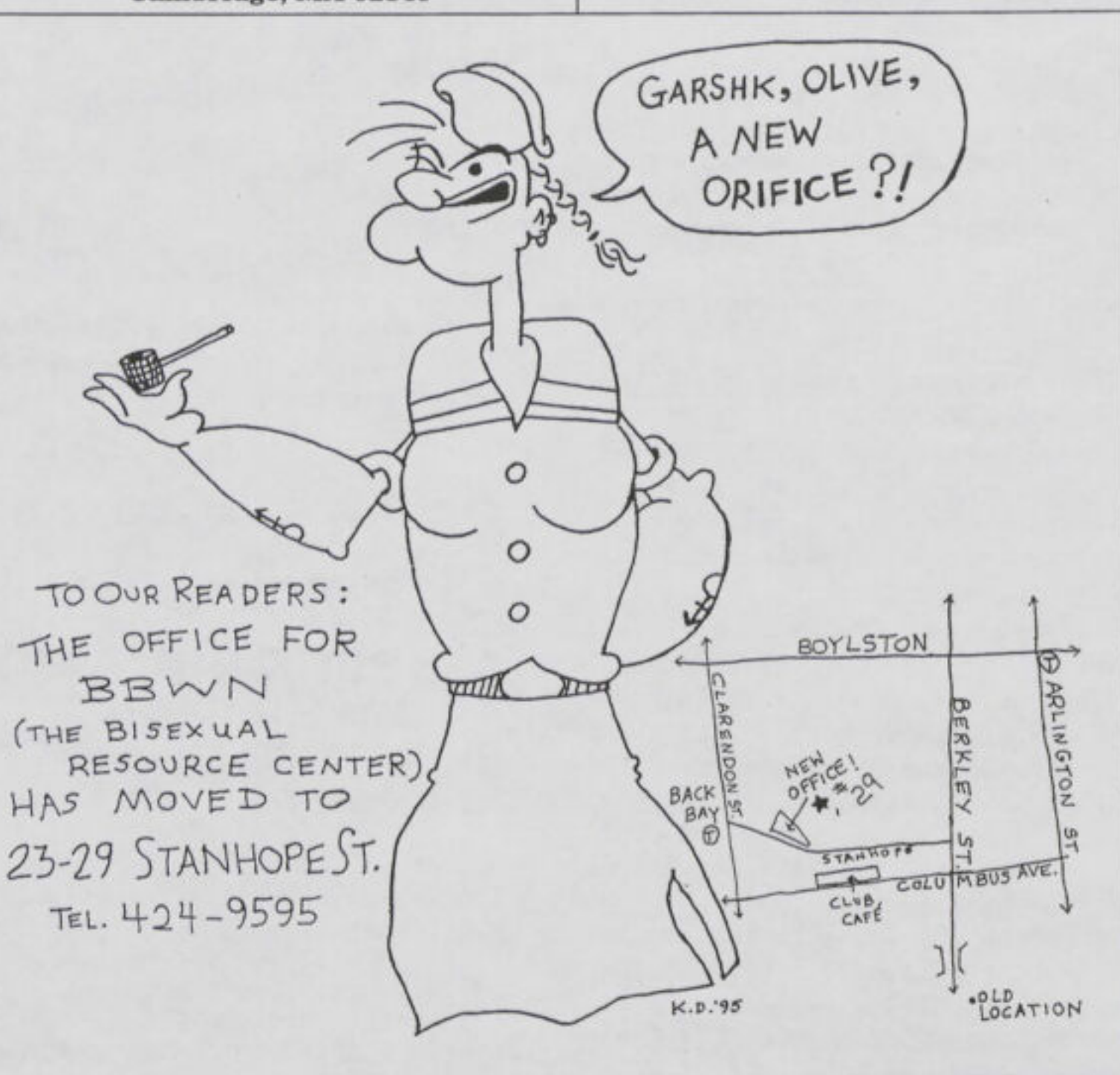
Show us your humorous side. Share your funny stories or review a book or movie that made you laugh.

Probable future themes:

Travel Men Racism

DEADLINE for the Dec./Jan. issue:

Friday, November 3, 1995



TO OUR READERS:
THE OFFICE FOR
BBWN
(THE BISEXUAL
RESOURCE CENTER)
HAS MOVED TO
23-29 STANHOPE ST.
TEL. 424-9595

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for
this issue of
BiWomen:

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Linda Blair

Kathleen Hepburn

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

plans had been suggested, this was the first time they were being put into action.

Ellyn began to outline the steering committee as she saw it based on previous discussions at the planning meetings held over the last few months. It would be a flexible body, primarily responsible for holding and attending meetings every other month at which activities would be reported on and discussed. The committee would also help in finding volunteers for BBWN's various activities. Robyn suggested putting teams in charge of some of the larger tasks, and/or breaking tasks down into more manageable pieces so that people would have more fun doing them. Kathleen agreed that having a central body was a good idea and would help by communicating with people who prefer to do their tasks in the background.

Ellyn brought out a list she'd made of tasks and positions, which were changed and added to. First we discussed current activities: Robyn agreed to continue as "Dollar Diva" (treasurer) and Gail will continue as "Mailing List Diva." Kathleen, the current Newsletter Editor, will assist Linda and Debbie in their transition into "Newsletter Divas"; Ananda also expressed interest in the newsletter staff, which we agreed should have even more people if possible. One member of the newsletter team will spend some time keeping better track of advertisers for the newsletter and trying to find some new ones. Ann will continue with the Intro Meetings held at the Women's Center; Debbie will continue to fill button and product orders for the time being, and Ellyn will continue picking up the mail. Ellyn will do more responding to the mail, with Katherine's help, and Katherine will design a brochure on BBWN to send with information requests. Deborah agreed to take charge of the newsletter mailing nights after this issue.

Next we asked for volunteers to fill new positions. Julie agreed to be in charge of finding hosts for brunches; Kathleen and Laura (with the help of Gail's mailing lists) will begin to organize BBWN members who are interested in volunteering to help and will refer them to people who need them. Ellyn and Kate will begin making a consistent effort to spread the word about BBWN as "P.R. Divas"; Kate will also begin to consider ways to contact and ease the way for new members in the future. Fennel agreed to begin to set up better communications with the Women's Center and the bisexual women's rap group that meets there weekly on Tuesday evenings.

Meeting continues on page 4

Letters

Robyn Ochs received the following letter:

Hi Everyone! San Diego had a really great pride parade and festival. We haven't succeeded in getting them to change the name of the parade yet but the fact that San Francisco has changed the name of their parade to include us was brought up at the parade monitors meeting in front of the leaders of at least half the gay community. Next year we are going to write letters to the parade board of directors and have several bisexual volunteers on the committee.

We had about ten more people participating in the parade this year and no serious hostility. Some of our gay friends ran into the street to embrace us which was very nice of them.

All the talk about monogamy and nonmonogamy in Newsweek brings up an issue I'm seeing more and more of in San Diego. A lot of the polyamorous people seem to feel threatened by the monogamous people and vice versa. The monogamous ones sometimes seem to look down on the polyamorous ones for being promiscuous and the polyamorous ones seem to regard the monogamous ones as "uptight" or anti-sex. A lot of people seem to just gloss over the difference by saying "We're all different, etc." What I'm wondering is whether it really is possible for monogamous people to spend a whole lot of time around people who are polyamorous without feeling really uncomfortable and vice versa. Don't we somehow need to acknowledge that this is a difficult situation and try and find solutions for it (for instance I heard of one monogamous bisexual group in SF) instead of just acting like we're "beyond all that"?

I'm also having a problem finding ways to discuss the difference between being opposed to the repression of sexuality on the one hand and also being opposed to the glorification of sex and the way it is used to manipulate people in this society (repressive desublimation) on the other.

Any advice appreciated.

Vicky Moore

That's Ms. Translesbigay to you!

Editor's note: We'll be happy to print responses to Vicky's letter and will pass them on to her.

Letters continues on page 6

Banner Bearer Wanted

We're still looking for the BBWN banner! If you've seen it, give us a call at the Bisexual Resource Center: (617) 424-9595.



GLAAD BI Caucus

GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) started a Bisexual Caucus in August, 1995. Earlier this year, GLAAD amended its mission statement to include bisexuals, and since then several people there have been pushing to become more active on bisexual issues.

GLAAD's Bisexual Caucus meetings will be the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00pm. Meetings are at GLAAD/150 West 26th St (btw 6th and 7th aves)/Suite 503/New York, NY 10001. For more information, call Cathay Che at GLAAD: 212/807-1700 (fax: 807-1806).



New Internet Group About Lesbian and Bisexual Women Formed.

A new internet usenet newsgroup, *soc.women.lesbian-and-bi*, for discussing the lives of lesbian and bisexual women was recently created. This will be a moderated newsgroup; you can contact the moderator at swlab-request@casti.com. The submissions address is swlab@casti.com.

Washington State Resource

Readers in Washington state might want to check out the *Skagit Gay Times*, a monthly newsletter published by the GLBS. For more information or a subscription, contact them at 1500 A East College Way #458, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.


Networking, from page 1

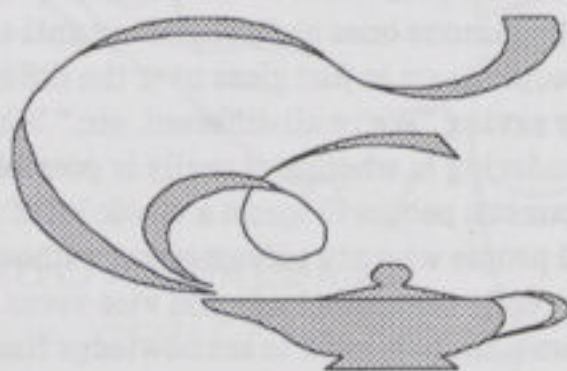
being, very visibly, a part of something bigger.

Another important place to be pulling things together is right here, in our own organization. Two things come immediately to mind.

First, we are called the Boston Bisexual Women's NETWORK. We can be supporting each other, building a sense of community and connection, getting to know and respect one another across our own internal differences (age; educational background; whether we're involved with a man, or a woman, or both or neither; race; class; politics; occupation; whether we are parents, and so on). We can be learning from each other, and helping women who are just beginning to come out through that (sometimes) very difficult place in their lives.

Second, we can all be outreach counselors, helping to draw new women into BBWN. Let other people know about BBWN and the Bi Women newsletter. Mention it to your friends. If you hear about a woman who is coming out as bisexual, or who already identifies as bisexual, give her one of your old newsletters. Invite her to come to a BBWN brunch with you.

Whatever the word networking really means, I am sure that it means reaching out. 



Meeting, from page 3


After more discussion of the purpose of the steering committee, we decided that it would work on cultural events as well. Individuals with ideas for events could present them at the meetings or relay them to a member of BBWN who would be going to the meeting. A "Brainstorm Diva" position was suggested to keep track of and generate new ideas for BBWN. The idea of a woman's coming-out group was again discussed as an event for the future. Katherine suggested a BBWN donation to the Gay and Lesbian Defense Fund to show our support and solidarity with them. For other publicity ideas, Robyn mentioned the new BINET Press Packet. Discussions about the "New Member Diva" position led to issues of discretion and how and when to contact people.

Finally, who would be on this steering committee and who would come to these bi-monthly meetings — renamed "organizational meetings" from the exclusive "steering committee meetings"? While a few people committed to attend meetings (see below), **anyone who attends any meeting will be considered part of the steering committee for that session and all input will be welcome.** Committed members will be responsible for attending the meetings and for contacting other "divas" to see how their jobs are going, as well brainstorming for new ideas, including cultural events and ways to increase the diversity of BBWN. Laura emphasized that both outreach and in-reach are important, and that better communication and structure will come only with long-term work.

The next organizational meeting will be held Monday, October 2nd at 7:00, either at Robyn's or at the new office space. Call Robyn at (617) 576-1066 or the Bi Office for more info. **ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME!! ALL IDEAS ARE WELCOME!!**

Current committed members:

Linda Blair
Debbie Block-Schwenk
Ann Golia
Kate Griffin
Deborah Levine
Robyn Ochs
Laura Sachs
Ellyn Ruthstrom

minutes submitted by Debbie Block-Schwenk 



We are an organization of people actively interested or participating in alternative relationships and family lifestyles.

We have been holding discussion groups, social event, and conferences for more than sixteen years.

For more information and sample newsletter, write to:

Family Tree
Box 441275
Somerville, MA 02144

RESOURCES FOR OUR BODIES

by [REDACTED]

I was able to reverse a pap smear that was classified as "severely abnormal" (on a tiny part of my cervix) over the course of two years. In the process I learned the real-life importance of women's relationships to our bodies and how to crack a health care system that we should all be entitled to use.

Because I've seldom had health insurance, I started out as a patient at the **Cambridge Hospital** where I was able to get free care, which I found to be mostly competent but impersonal. My last visit to a gynecologist there was so rough that I sobbed privately during my few minutes alone at the end of the appointment.

I didn't even know the purpose of pap tests when I first got abnormal results in 1993, even though I'd already been having pelvic exams for at least five years. In the spirit of networking for those who don't know, it's to test for precancerous cells caused by a virus found in up to 50% of the population. These cell changes are usually very slow and not dangerous if routinely detected and treated at most stages. Since it potentially affects so many of us, it would be in everyone's interest for doctors to briefly explain and prepare all patients as to its purpose, which had not been my prior experience.

Most of my information at this point came from visiting the **Boston Women's Health Book Collective** in Davis Square, Somerville, whose library had almost an entire file cabinet drawer of medical journal clippings on my condition alone. I was really scared, and as I began to learn there, knowledge was to become power in this situation.

I also had to call on a networking resource that looks slightly different for each of us: **friends**. My then roommate Maya helped me research doctors and called lists of them so I could find one with whom I was comfortable; my friend Christine from a close knit bisexual women's support group kept me company while I called financial assistance offices at hospitals and came along to doctor's visits, as did my good pal Christina. My friend Rayellen, from the same support group and an emergency room receptionist at Mass General, filled me in on nuts and bolts of the health care system that would later be essential to me.

The doctor who finally felt right to me was at the **Fenway Community Health Center** (and also advertises right here in *BiWomen*). They've almost perfected their safety net over the last sev-

eral years to make sure patients are informed about financial aid there —on their sliding scale I pay \$3 a visit for almost *anything* with a salary in the teens, while another uninsured friend with a salary in the 20's pays \$25. It's bi-, gay-, and straight- friendly there. My doctor is kind and smart.

Well, my abnormalities weren't getting better. After all that effort, I realized I still didn't have the kind of resources I would feel most comfortable using: nonsurgical and holistic. It felt like I had to start over in looking for health care resources.

I often use bookstores as support groups and self help centers, and one day in WordsWorth I scoured the women's studies section and came across the book *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, a 700 page but extremely readable volume by Christiane Northrup, a medical doctor dedicated to mind/body healing and considered the counterpart for gynecology to Deepak Chopra and Bernie Siegel. These methods made enormous sense to me and really expanded my education.

But beyond powerful emotional healing, I didn't want to supervise my own use of nutritional, herbal, and vitamin remedies, which can be harmful or ineffective if you don't know what you're doing. Through my co-op grocery store newsletter, I found Mary Pat Palmer of Jamaica Plain who calls herself **The Urban Herbalist**. She was generous over the phone and I attended one of her workshops—and among a number of recommendations, stopped eating sugar per her very thorough explanation as to how it affected my condition.

My next pap smear and biopsy were normal. I was relieved—and so grateful to know that I may have contributed to my own healing. That sense of empowerment was very precious. I relaxed my vigilance in seeking resources for this condition, but stuck to my lifestyle changes, which I hope will continue to keep me healthier.

I networked like crazy for this. Now I know my way around part of the health care system, and that I can advocate for myself where I formerly felt neglected. I recommend most of the above organizations that I mentioned, and I hope other women will feel they have the power to be informed about their bodies, entitled to resources in their communities, and safe and empowered about their health. We deserve it.



Thinking of Moving?

Great Gay and Lesbian Places to Live. The Official Guide claims to be "the number one book the homosexual and bisexual community has been waiting for." 133 cities and towns across the U.S. are profiled from a gay, lesbian and bisexual perspective, including information on state and local laws (domestic partnership ordinances, sodomy laws), and queer or queer friendly community centers, coffeehouses, support groups, events, businesses, churches, publications and more. It also has general demographic information like population, size, growth rate, climate, unemployment rate, average costs of renting or buying a home, etc.

The guide includes a "What the Locals Say" section as well, which from the sample entry on Anchorage, Alaska, included with the press release, may be the most useful part. Sounds great, but as far as we know, they didn't ask any Boston bis what we think of our home city, which houses one of the most thriving bi communities in the country.

The guide is available on Mac or PC diskette, 3 1/2" or 5 1/4", for \$19.95 or in print from your local bookstore or the publisher for \$16.95. For info or to order a copy call Lynn West at (901) 274-6620.



!OutProud! Provides Online Resources for Youth

!OutProud!, the National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth, has announced plans for a broad range of online services as part of the new Microsoft Network, in conjunction with Planet Out, a new online community for lesbians, gays and bisexuals.

!OutProud! will provide referrals to local organizations, book recommendations, brochures and other literature, information on starting a high school "Gay/Straight Alliance", and a safe electronic space for lesbian/gay youth to communicate and find community.

!OutProud! can be contacted at:

!OutProud!

P.O. Box 24589

San Jose, CA 95154-4589

phone: 408-269-6125

fax: 408-269-5328

email: info@outproud.org

World Wide Web: <http://www.outproud.org/outproud/>

Letters, from page 3

An Open Letter to Ann Landers

We received this thought provoking letter from Marcia recently and wanted to share it with all of you. We have our doubts about it finding its way into your morning paper and didn't want you to miss out.

Dear Ann Landers,

I'm a first-time writer, but I am moved to answer the question: How come a woman can wear men's clothes but a man can't wear women's, without great societal censure?

Simply put, we live in a marketplace hierarchical society where males are on top, and when a man "steps down" into a female position, he is seen as sacrificing power. The deeper question is, of course, what kind of power, but one has to admit that income determines status. Men make much more per hour than women do, over 90% of domestic violence is male against female, and single women without job skills often chose between McJobs, welfare, and prostitution. The greatest insult for a Marine cadet is being called a "girl" (no wonder Shannon Faulkner had a hard time without even one other woman to roll eyes with!)

Compounding this male-female disparity is homophobia. The greatest fear of a little boy playing in the neighborhood park is to be called gay. Gay men are actively hated by other men, because they pose a physical threat. Why can't heterosexual men "just say no" to unwanted advances, as we women have always been told to do, even to men twice our size? Lesbians are ignored or eroticized, because they are not as much of a physical threat. A woman is told not to dress "seductively," so she wears a power suit to work, but a man in a dress is gay-bashed, no matter what his sexuality. Giving up straight male dominance is seen as an unforgivable sin.

On an equal playing field of male/female, and of gay/lesbian/bisexual/straight, we could wear anything. Substance would finally triumph over style, and we could relate as the complex human spirits we are. For an example of how this can be done, your readers can learn about We' wah, the Zuni berdache who visited Washington D.C. in the nineteenth century. His/her flowing costume was as grandly accepted there as it was in his/her homeland. Different meant different (and even special), not inferior or perverse.

I wonder what the Pope thinks about all this? I once read that Tallulah Bankhead once visited a famous cardinal friend at Mass, and as he passed by in the opening procession she whispered, "Your dress is lovely, daahling, but your purse is on fire!"

Sincerely,
Marcia Deihl



Biphobia in the Gay Press

by Wayne Bryant

Bay Windows has yet another bi bashing editorial in the current (September 14th) issue. Written by Bruce Bawer (author of *A Place at the Table*), the article whines about all the attention that bisexuality has gotten lately in the press, how a lot of it is misinformation [true], and how it will make it harder for gay kids to come out to their parents [huh?].

I'm not going to type in the whole article, but I will pass along the ending paragraph...

"Bottom line: In order to educate straight Americans about the nature of sexual orientation, we need clarity, truth, integrity. We don't need modish academic fetishization of ambiguity or insipid mass-media glamorizing of people who can't face who they really are."

Virtually every instance of the word bisexual in the article is preceded by an adjective like "so-called" or "self-described." The intent, as in the last sentence, is to imply that bisexuals just can't face up to the fact that they're really gay.

Editor's note: You can contact Bay Windows at: 1523 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118

Phone: (617) 266-6670, Fax: (617) 266-5973

E-mail: letters@baywindows.com



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NETWORKING ON OTHER PLANETS

by Lynne Levine

I've been a member of the Gaylaxian Science Fiction Society for nearly a decade and am currently the club's president. The Gaylaxians is a bi-friendly club—the entire range of the Kinsey scale is well represented among our membership! We meet monthly in members' homes, for potlucks and various activities including video watching, talking about books, and sharing creativity (which has included readings, singing silly songs, and making costumes for Pride.) The Gaylaxians started in Boston about 10 years ago and now has chapters in many cities. The larger organization, The Gaylactic Network, can be reached by writing to P.O. Box 127, Brookline, MA 02146.

How does the greater Science Fiction community feel about us? So far we've gotten along well with other organizations. A Gaylaxians member who just returned from the World Science Fiction Convention in Glasgow, Scotland, reported that there was extensive programming there for and by the gay/lesbian/bi/trans community, and attributes that to our visibility within the SF community. Such programming at a Worldcon did not exist ten years ago. Closer to home, the local chapter hosts at least one gay fandom party at a regional convention each year.

The Boston club will also be hosting the next Gaylaxicon, a queer SF convention to be held July 5-7, 1996 in Burlington, MA. For info about the convention write to: Gaylaxicon VII, PO Box 176, Somerville, MA 02143, or call (617) 321-9292, email: info@Gaylaxian.org. I hope to see lots of you there!

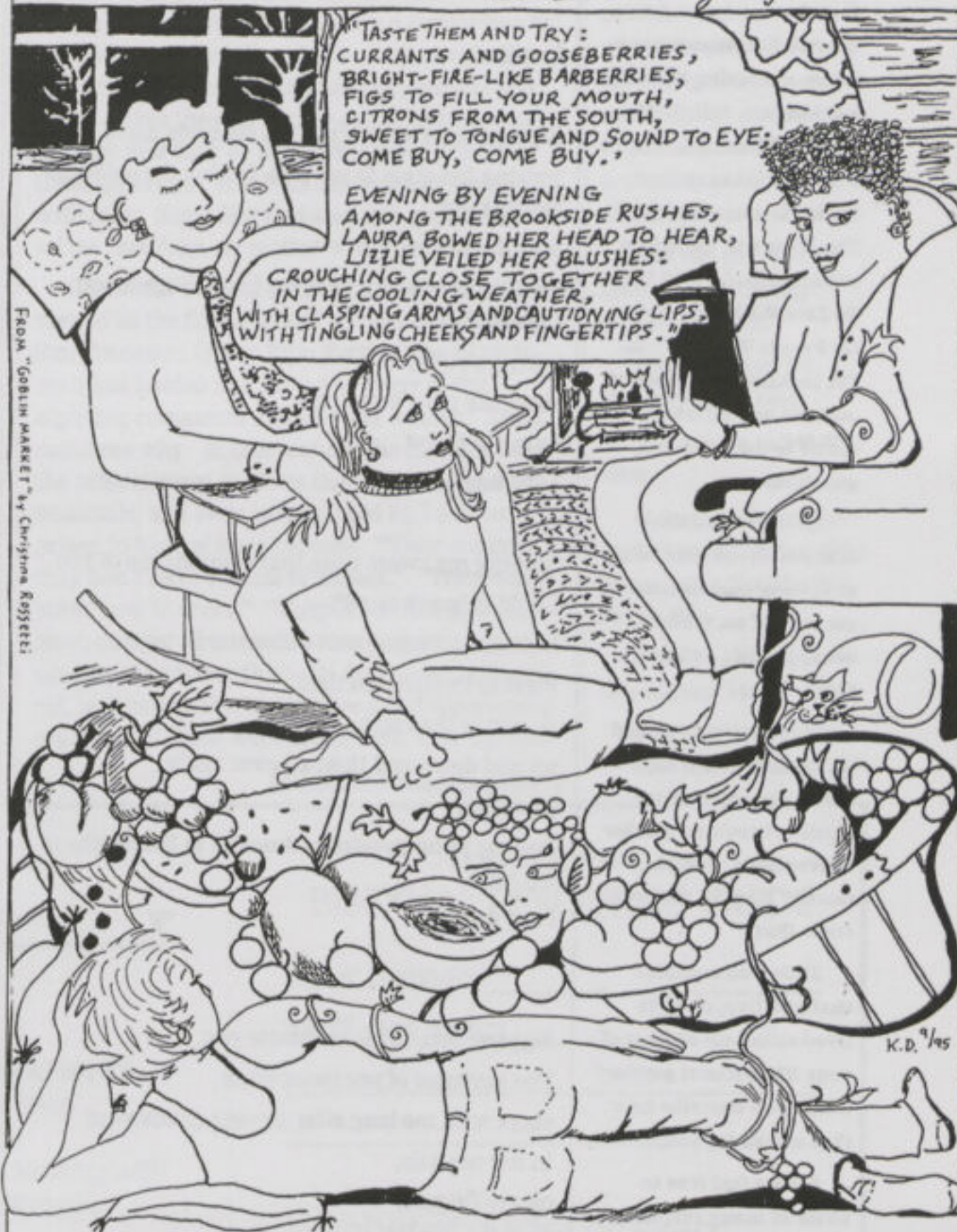
If you're looking to talk about the great SF novel you just read, or you want to meet others who like Star Trek (in its many incarnations) or Babylon-5, you might want to check us out. The Gaylaxians can be reached at P.O. Box 1059, Boston MA 02103, or you can contact me at (617) 576-1097, or by email at llevine@mit.edu. 

Interested in joining a new social group?

Whether you're out or just coming out, single or married and would like to share interests, ideas or experiences.....

**Please call Loretta or Jen
at (617) 284-6768**

ALL Bi, MYSELF "Bi Evenings" by Kathrine Douthitt



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CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140
617.497.6581

Outlaw in Labor: Call for Submissions

Hello. My name is Kate Bornstein, and this is a call for submissions for an upcoming book I'm working on, called "My Gender Workbook." It's a follow-up to my first book, "Gender Outlaw." The book will contain a section called "1001 Ways To Live Without Gender, By People Who Do." So, I'm looking for a *lot* of outlaws and in-laws to respond to the following questions:

1) Do you consider that you break any rules or laws or conventions of gender? If so, which ones? How do you do that?

2) Have you ever had to, or do you now have to overcome any fear regarding breaking gender conventions? Which fear(s)? How do you overcome that?

3) Do you consider that you live, or have lived either all or part of your life without gender? Could you describe how that works for you?

Please feel free to write as many responses as you like, to any, or all three of these questions. Answers can be humorous, serious, in any vein whatsoever, poetry, cartoons, slogans, or more questions. The only thing I'm asking is that they be *short.* because I want to include as many people's voices as possible.

Sadly, there's no payment available for these, but I'll be *very* glad to credit your words as you

cont'd on page 9

Poetry Corner

Last in a series of three poems by Blanca C. Alcaez

Untitled

Sipping my sweet wine that reminds me of you
putting the glass to my lips, feeling the coldness
against my
mouth.

parting my lips for you, my love, I ingest you
inside of me,

taking you in,
savoring your sweetness,
dying of thirst

I am warm.

Sipping my sweet wine that reminds me of you

I hold it in my mouth

letting my tongue move it as it will

First to the left and then

slowly to the right

up and down and then all over again,

I swallow

Feeling your sweetness descend to the depths of
my soul

I am warm.

Sipping you, my love, I taste you.

The perfume of my sweet wine

stays with me long after having drunk you;

in my nostrils,

on my fingers,

in my mouth,

Your scent comforts me.

Sipping you, my love, I desire you

I know that my thirst for you

will never die.

Let me breathe you,

let me drink you,

let me taste you,

Let me love you.

Rainbow

by Jennett Bailey

Bilingual trilingual I sign

my difference

Know I fit under this arch

this multicoloured bow

that reflects my world in

primaries and secondaries

not positive not negative

neutralizing

black or white.

In this safe shade

after rains

My girlfriend says I love

women - only women

rounded ones square ones

short tall

only women make me

sing the blues

soar like vectors in open sky.

Now he

likes men.

The way they move smell

toughing soft or roughened skin

only men have ever done it for him.

And I

care not to gender-limit my

twin soul

I find love where I find it.

Embrace it.

For in this uncertain climate

I never know

when the rains

might come

again.

Written for *Icon* Inqueery Edition

November 7, 1994

Reprinted with permission. Originally appeared in *Icon*, a weekly newspaper for Iowa City and Coralville, November 17, 1994. Jennett Bailey is originally from Jamaica and now lives in New York City.

Movie Reviews:

"Lesbians Who Date Men" & "The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love"

by Ellyn Ruthstrom

The short film "Lesbians Who Date Men", directed by Monica T. Nolan, was recently shown at a Cambridge Women's Center BiRap. (BiRap meets every Tuesday, 7:30 - 9:30, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge.) The film's title immediately brings identity issues into question. Can a lesbian date men? why would a woman who goes out with men want to be considered a lesbian? And, why do these women not want to identify as bisexual?

Using the image of the Lesbian Membership Card (don't leave home without it) to pointedly comment on the lesbian *purity* question, Nolan stamps "approved" or canceled" on the card according to what the various women say about themselves. By doing this she illustrates the community standards that shape our identity choices. The membership card image also begs the question, if you don't want to adhere to the lesbian community standards — namely, don't sleep with men — why would you want to be in

the club? (Which brings to mind for me the Catholic church, the Republican party, the military...)

As Nolan points out, however, these women desperately do want to maintain a connection to their lesbian identities. Many of the women express their desire to maintain the political and social selves they had nurtured in lesbian community, and they do not want others to view them differently just because they are sexual with men. Some feel that something about themselves *is lesbian*, no matter who they sleep with.

One of the women at the BiRap was interviewed in the film and told the group that at the San Francisco Queer Film Festival the bi audience had hooted and hissed at many of the biphobic comments made by the women. And I could see why. In one section, the director asks the interviewees to share their impressions of bisexuals, and even as a tenured bi, I was surprised to hear of few new ones. "They are grim, they don't have a sense of humor." "They don't know how to dress." "They listen to Donovan." Now, compared to the fact that bisexuals are usually raked over the coals for being non-political, untrustworthy, indecisive and disease-carriers (some of these were mentioned, too), I guess

Movies continued on page 10

Outlaw in Labor from pg. 8

like. Please do include your name and a way to contact you (email, fax or snailmail addresses, please) to get permission in writing from you to publish your words. Deadline for submission is October 31st (Halloween), 1995.

You can get your responses to me in any number of ways:

1) e-mail them to:
1001ways@eor.com

2) fax them to 206-860-5030

3) snail mail them to:
1001 Ways/1202 East Pike
Street, #991/Seattle, WA
98122, USA

Finally, please pass this request along!

Thanks *very* much.
Kate Bornstein

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BISEXUAL RESOURCE GUIDE ▼

Robyn Ochs, editor

Contains:

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The Bisexual Resource Guide, published by the Bisexual Resource Center, is available for only US\$8, postage paid. To order YOUR copy, send a check, along with your address, to:

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The Bisexual Resource Center is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization, and donations are therefore tax deductible. Orders of 5 or more copies may be discounted 10%; 10 or more copies 15%; 25 or more copies 20%.

Women's Fund Conference

How can women — as investors, consumers, and donors — manage our money in a way that benefits ourselves, our families, and our communities?

Come to the Boston Women's Fund seventh annual conference on "Women, Money and Social Change: Taking Care of Ourselves, Our Families, Our Communities." The conference will be held on Saturday, November 11, 1995, from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change, Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, Boston, MA. The fee for the all-day conference is \$85.00, which includes breakfast, lunch, and a diverse range of workshops covering socially responsible investing, financial planning, philanthropy, and social change for women. Gail Snowden, president of Bank of Boston's First Community Bank, is the Keynote Speaker. To register or for more information, call 617-375-0035.

Movies, *continued from pg.9*

having bad fashion sense is not that reprehensible.

What these and other comments in the film made me think, however, was how sad it was that these lesbians were so determined to establish a distance between themselves and you or me. The women defined bisexuals in negative terms, not just as different. Continuing to identify as lesbian made them *better* than bisexuals. It wasn't about sexuality, or desire or who they slept — it couldn't be — because if it was then they would have to admit their behavior and their love of women was shared by many bisexual women. And also they would have to affiliate themselves with a group that they had learned to trash.

Obviously, Nolan did not make this film for a bisexual audience, however, bi women's experiences are very present because we share so many experiences with lesbians (even when they don't want to admit it). Indeed, many bisexual women have identified as lesbian (hasbians) at different points in their lives; it's been a necessary "phase" for them as much as some women who at first choose the bisexual label and later become lesbian. Those individual choices are so important and point to the growth and self-awareness that effect our sexuality and the way we see ourselves. Nolan's film poses good questions within the discussion and allows various women's voices to answer them for themselves.

Lesbian or bisexual: who gets to claim her? This issue has recently come up in our community in terms of another film, The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love. Maria Maggenti, director of this "must see" lesbian film, is currently in a relationship with a man, but identified as a lesbian for many years. In a May 25th Metroline piece Maggenti was quoted, "I never use the term bisexual because I come from such a politicized environment. I feel very at home being a dyke, just as I feel very at home loving this man." However, in a June Sojourner interview, Maggenti seems to have repositioned herself. "I don't identify as anything anymore. I identify as Maria. It's interesting because I used to be able to say I was a lesbian, and that wrapped it all up. I don't find it that easy for me anymore. I have great respect for the omnisexual possibilities that people have, including myself. So I respect that by not giving myself a label." Her "anti-label" feelings are certainly *very* familiar to bisexuals.

That, of course, is all behind-the-scenes stuff and has nothing to do with the fact that Two Girls is a fabulous movie for anyone to see and enjoy (besides those damn right-wing Christians

who can't seem to enjoy anything anyway). The Boston Globe put it on its best current "date movies" list without a qualifier and the mainstream reviews I have seen have been very supportive of it as a good film not *just* a good queer film. And I think that speaks to the way Maggenti captures the elements of any "first love" experience. The first meeting, the growing attraction that breeds awkwardness, the first date, the first kiss, the first sex. Classic American cinema. With those firmly in place, Maggenti then adds the distinguishing features of a lesbian love story: the process of coming out to oneself and to others, the homophobic reactions of others and the fear of publicly displaying affection.

Randy, the sweetest baby butch you may ever lay eyes on, is from a working class, white family and works as a mechanic in the local garage. Evie is from a middle class, African American family and drives her bright and shiny new Jeep into Randy's garage with a problem we know Randy will be able to fix. Each of them live in women-headed households: Evie with her divorced mother, Randy with her lesbian aunt and her aunt's partner. The race and class of the characters intersect in ways that create realities that are not often depicted in mainstream movies, but Maggenti's touch is a light one. It's a movie, not a political analysis.


Yet, it is not without a political lens. Maggenti's look into Randy's home life is a detailed and touching portrayal of a lesbian feminist household: the communal spirit, the political discourse, the earthy humor and, at its core, an appreciation of women. For me, one of the nicest touches of the film is Randy's aunt's over protectiveness of Randy when she knows she is interested in Evie. Evie thinks it's racism, and the audience may at first think it possible, too — why wouldn't a lesbian aunt encourage her niece to date any woman? But Maggenti juxtaposes the aunt's behavior with Evie's mother's and we see that both are being responsible parents who are just worried about their kids. The audience still roots for the two women's young love to be a success, but parental concern is a very real hurdle teenagers have to deal with, whether they are straight or queer.

This is one of those films that you will want to see more than once. If you see it in a cinema full of women-loving women, the laughter the film elicits can often prevent you from hearing all of the wonderful dialogue and you'll need to see it again to hear more of it. It is also one of those

Movies *continues on next page*

Movies from previous page

films that you don't want to tell others too much about, except "Go see this film!" It's a fairly simple plot and the telling of it tends to diminish the tender quality Maggenti has imbued it with.

Note: The BiRap has been working to create a bi/lesbian dialogue. Recently, when the Lesbian Rap was discussing biphobia, BiRap asked if they could join in. They have also scheduled a second meeting with the Lesbian Rap on September 19 to continue the discussion. Keep those channels of communication open! 

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

November 5 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See October 1st.

November 6 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us! Call Debbie for more info (617)731-9060.

November 8 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

November 11 ♦ Saturday

BiWomen Potluck Brunch at 12:30 pm at Julie's near Coolidge Corner in Brookline. Share food and conversation. Call Julie at 731-2307 for directions.

"Women, Money and Social Change: Taking Care of Ourselves, Our Families, Our Communities," the Boston Women's Fund seventh annual conference, will be held at Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, Boston. Fee is \$85. For information call (617) 375-0035

November 12 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Bowling Day. Let's go bowling! Big balls, little balls. We can do either one. Meet at 2 pm at Lanes & Games on Rte 2 in Arlington, right near the Alewife T stop. Call Sharon for info. (617) 497-7646.

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Join us for a fun evening of dancing and socializing at Ryle's. Tea Dance is from 5 -10 pm, 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge.

November 14 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 4th.

November 17 ♦ Friday

Lesbian comedian Suzanne Westinoffer. 8pm at

the Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave., Boston. Tickets \$19.50 or \$16.50 at box office. Call Linda for info on going as a group at (617) 282-3537.

November 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11 am at Thornton's at 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

November 19 ♦ Sunday

AIDS Danceathon. Help represent the bi community and raise money for the fight against AIDS. This is the most fun fundraiser of the year. Contact Jennifer at (617)324-5779 for pledge sheet and info.

November 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. 1:30pm at Picante at 735 Mass. Ave. in Central Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

November 28 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Now on Tuesday Night!!! Come check out our new office, schmooze with lots of cool women and get out your newsletter. 7-9pm at the Bi Office.

November 29 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 4th.

May 24-27, 1996

4th International Bisexual Conference, Berlin.

Island Lifestyle Asks "Are You Bisexual?"

The August issue of *Island Lifestyle*, a Hawaiian gay and lesbian magazine, featured a cover story on bisexuality by Sarah Banks. Quoting from both the recent Newsweek article and other sources, the piece covered the Kinsey scale and gave real-life examples, including that of a man whose gay clientele boycotted his hair salon when he married a woman. He's now living with a man and dating a woman part-time.

A side-bar by Sharon Forman Sumpter corrected many of the common myths about bisexuality.

For more information on *Island Lifestyle*, contact Lifestyle Publishing Co., Inc., 2851A Kihei Place, Honolulu Hawaii 96816.



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The Bi Office has moved!

The Bisexual Resource Center is now at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. Our new phone # is (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

L/G/B Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals.

Concert band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

October 1 • Sunday

Love in the Time of College, a new queer coming of age play. Sept. 29, 30, Oct. 1. The play is part of the Out on the Edge Festival of Lesbian and Gay Theater at the Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont St., Boston. Tickets are \$13. Info (617) 542-4210.

October 1 • Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

October 2 • Monday

BBWN Planning Meeting. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Come help make BBWN a fun, happening organization. We need your ideas and energy! All women welcome.

October 3 • Tuesday

Biversity Double Feature. Two really awful "must see" films circa 1970. 5:15 - Zee and Company, 7:15 - The Killing of Sister George. At the Brattle Theater, Cambridge, near the Harvard Square T stop on the Red Line.

October 4 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

October 8 • Sunday

Biversity Bi-cycling trip to Walden Pond via the Minuteman Trail and roads leaving at 8:30 am. The trip is roughly 18 miles each way. For info, call Jonathan at (617) 648-6884 or send email to urbach@fas.harvard.edu.

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. 8:30 am and 18 miles each way not quite your style? Then head on down to Inman Square instead and dance with the girls at Ryle's. Tea Dance is from 5 -10 pm, 212 Hampshire St., Cambridge.

October 15 • Sunday

BiWomen Potluck Brunch and Workshop at Deborah's in Jamaica Plain. Bruch at 12:30; at 2:00 PM promptly Deborah will be leading an experiential workshop on sensuality. Call her at 522-1628 for directions and to

sign up for the workshop.

October 17 • Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 4th.

October 21 • Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11 am at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square in Somerville. The Davis Square stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

October 24 • Tuesday

Biversity Double Feature. Two excellent films. 6:00 - I've Heard the Mermaids Singing, 7:40 - Strangers in Good Company. At the Brattle Theater, Cambridge, near the Harvard Square T stop on the Red Line.

October 28 & 29 • Saturday and Sunday

"Speaking Out: A Two-Day Training for Speaking on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues" sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers' Bureau of Boston. This workshop at Lesley College in Cambridge is designed for anyone who wants to use public speaking as a tool for social change. \$50, \$30 students, \$20 teens (ages 14-17). Financial assistance available. Info (617) 354-0133.

October 31 • Tuesday

Biversity Double Feature. Get in the Halloween mood with two vampire films with bisexual vampires. 6:00 pm - Daughters of Darkness, 7:45 pm - The Hunger. At the Brattle Theater in Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

October 29 • Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:30 pm at the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Cafe Moka on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

November 1 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 4th.

November 1 & 2 • Wednesday & Thursday

"Each of Us Beloved: Sexual Orientation and Spirituality Within Faith Communities," sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Speakers' Bureau. 6-9 pm Wed., 9 am-5 pm Thurs. \$15; \$10 students; \$5 Wed. only. Friends Meeting House, Cambridge. info (617) 354-0133.

November 3 • Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: Humor (submissions on all subjects welcome). Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews, etc, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Bi Women

December 1995/January 1996

Vol. 13 No. 6

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

LAUGHTER IS GOOD MEDICINE

by Kate Griffin

I was born in the 1940's and in my formative years, the media rarely allowed women to be funny. Men told jokes and played practical jokes on each other and so on. I believe that one of the great gifts of the feminist movement is to have liberated women to laugh and joke and have fun in public because of course even way back then, we had a hell of a good time in private.

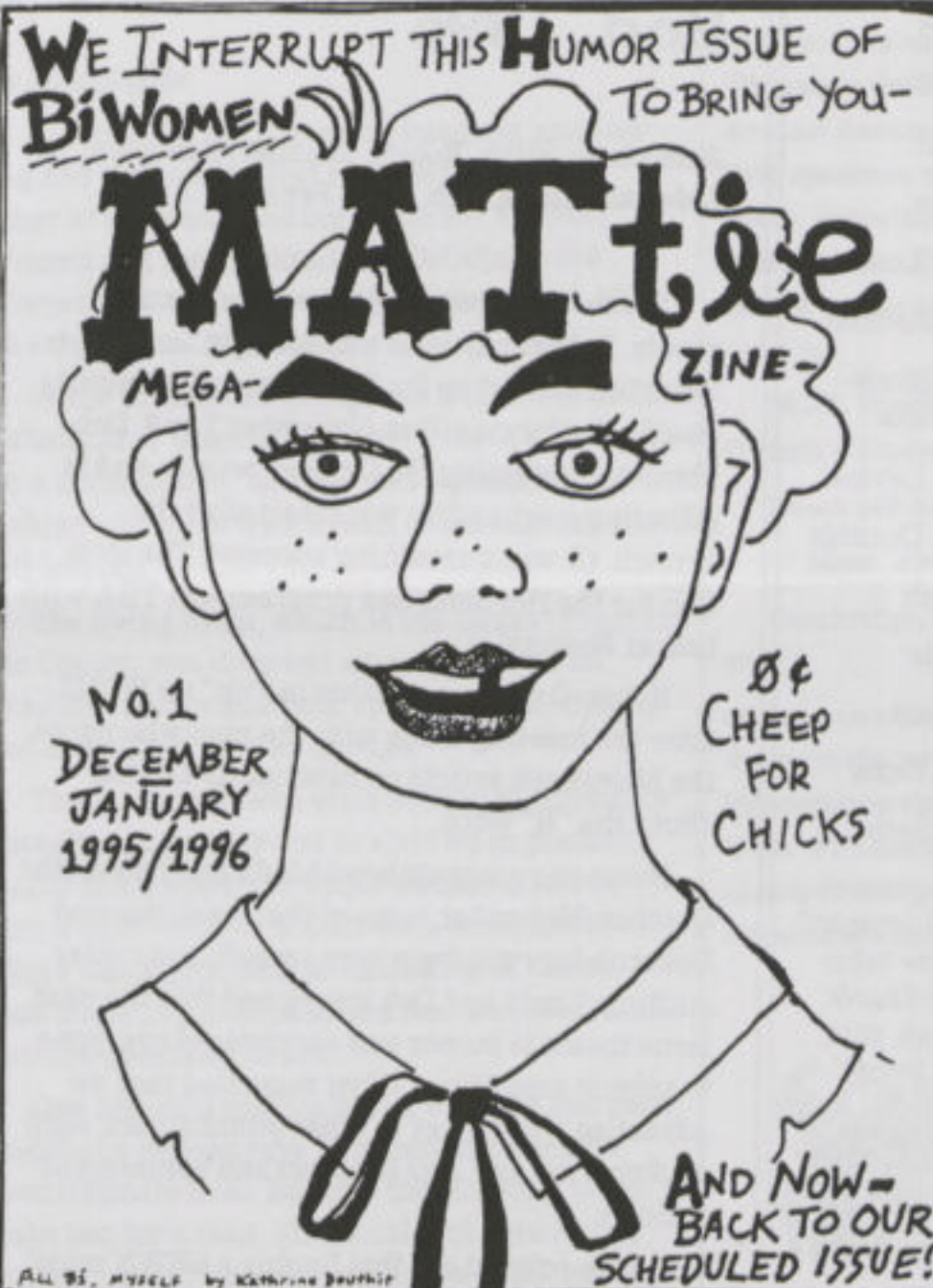
I work for a woman's organization, and meet with women's groups all over the U.S. and Canada. One of the most wonderful things about these meetings in that there is always a great deal of laughter. And, when an important woman speaks, she always makes us laugh. I've noticed this in Boston appearances of Margaret Atwood, Anna Quinlan, Jeanne Kilbourne and many other women.

I've also noticed that generally speaking, women take themselves less seriously than men. I recall an address by the Mayor of Toronto, who never once bored us with what her government had accomplished. Instead she gave a fine serious talk punctuated with very amusing remarks and never, never told us what a wonderful mayor she was. I've never heard an elected male fail to explain how wonderful his administration, and he, have been.

But how can I talk of humor without telling a few jokes? Here's a true story told by the Arlington Street Church's Reverend Kim K. Crawford Harvie at a recent talk she gave at The Theological Opportunities Program at Harvard: I've changed only the names:

Thelma and Louise had been in a monogamous relationship for 25 years without ever mentioning the "L" word to Louise's father. He became very ill; almost died but rallied. Louise decided that she did not want him to die without knowing who she was, so she took the day off from work and finally she said: "Dad, there is something that I have been afraid to tell you for 25 years, but I want you to know who I really am. Dad, I am a Lesbian." Her father shot up in bed in surprise and gasped, "Does Thelma know?"

Humor continues on page 11



MICHAEL DANE: LIFE AS AN OUT BI COMIC

by Linda Blair

If you were to head out on one of these brisk fall nights to one of the Dick Doherty comedy clubs that pepper the Boston area, you just might be in for a very pleasant surprise. That's because if you happened to pick a night when local comedian Michael Dane was performing, you'd have to rethink your assumption that any comic who performs at a mainstream club has either to pass some test proving that they're narrow minded or sign some kind of pledge promising that their act will ignore social and political issues altogether.

Not Michael Dane. "I like to fuck with the homophobes' heads," he says. "My stand-up is more theater. I try to push buttons."

Dane routinely works at least ten minutes

Michael Dane continues on page 4

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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*Volunteers of
the Month*



Ann
Linda Blair
Gail
Kate

Ellyn Ruthstrom
Debbie Block-
Schwenk
Deboran Levine
Katharine Douthit
Sarah
Julie
Fennel
Robyn Ochs
Laura Sachs

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

**Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:**

Debbie Block-Schwenk
Linda Blair
Kathleen Hepburn

**Printed on
recycled paper**

Minutes — 2nd BBWN Organizing Meeting, October 2nd, 1995

Attendees: Ellyn, Robyn, Rosalie, Katherine,
Deborah, Linda, Deb, Kate, Fennel

The meeting began with some announce-
ments. Deborah Levine was going to lead a Hot
Safer Sex workshop for the Fenway Community
Health Center on either November 7 or 8. Deb
also was hostessing the October brunch and fa-
cilitating a sensuality workshop after the
brunch. (It was a smashing success!) The loca-
tion for the Hot Safer Sex program was TBA with
info at Fenway.

Robyn Ochs was on "One in Ten" on WFNX
after the meeting along with the man who wrote
the Newsweek article on bisexuality talking
about the "B" word.

Everyone congratulated Linda and Deb on the
October/November issue of the newsletter and
Deborah for running a very smooth newsletter
stuffing. Linda and Deb mentioned that the next
issue theme is humor and encouraged everyone
to submit something. Ellyn suggested that we
advertise our themes in other publications, such
as *Sojourner* and *Bay Windows* and volunteered
to do so.

Linda pointed out that having a BBWN email
account in the office would make receiving some
submissions easier and they would be ready to
be plugged into the newsletter format. She will
look into the software needs and prices and re-
port back to the group.

Dollar Diva (AKA Robyn) reported that there
is about \$2,500 in the treasury. She also sug-
gested that due to expected expenses and antici-
pated income BBWN should consider doing a
fund-raiser within the next fiscal year. There
was some discussion of fund raising ideas, but it
was suggested we do more brainstorming at a
future meeting.

Meeting continues on page 3

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the Feb./March issue:

Bi Media

Book, TV and movie reviews --
or share your personal experiences
and impressions!

Probable future themes:

Travel Men Racism

DEADLINE for the Feb./March issue

January 5, 1996

Please provide submissions on paper
(typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk
(DOS or Mac), and include a name or
phone number if possible.

If you do **not** want your name published,
please tell us! Otherwise we may assume
that you do not mind being listed as a
contributor. **You may contribute
anonymously, or just use your first
name, if you wish.**

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art,
news and views to:

**BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140**

A Fond Farewell to Kathleen

Kathleen Hepburn, who has been newsletter
diva extraordinaire for the past four years, is
leaving town. Kathleen's skill and inspiration
transformed *BiWomen* from a few typed sheets of
paper to the more exciting and professional for-
mat you see today.

Kathleen's dedication to the newsletter and to
BBWN were often behind the scenes, but we
want to take this opportunity to publicly thank
her for all her work throughout the years.

Kathleen and her partner Sue are moving to
upstate New York. We wish them the best and
hope to bring you updates from time to time as
they adjust to the new neighborhood and
Kathleen pursues her goal of becoming an auto
mechanic.

We'll miss you, Kathleen!



Meeting, from page 2

Ellyn presented the up-to-date Diva List and it was suggested that she compile a list for the office of diva's names and phone numbers for easy reference.

Ellyn asked for some discussion about the renewal system that is currently used for the newsletter. Renewal notices go out in the September, November and January issues to all subscribers. The group wants to bring this up at another time to see if the system needs changing or not.

Kate reported on the bisexual/lesbian discussion that the two Tuesday night rap groups at the Cambridge Women's Center held in September (see Kate's full report). She said that the room was packed and the discussion was lively and productive. The groups are going to meet together the first Tuesday of every month from 7-9 PM beginning in November. (Note: For some reason this has not happened. We will keep you posted developments.)

Possible upcoming BBWN Outings? It was mentioned that Coro Allegro is having its first concert on November 19th and Rosalie offered to find out if there were group rates. The AIDS danceathon at the Hynes Convention Center is also that night and it was suggested we could have a dance team. Linda mentioned that Suzanne Westenhoffer is performing locally soon and maybe BBWN could get a group together to go.

Katherine brought up the idea of wanting to make a donation at some point to the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders or another organization that deals with fighting for queer civil rights. The idea needs more investigation, but the discussion brought up the issue of looking into GLAD's reluctance to add bisexual to their mission and/or name.

Katherine also showed to the group two fabulous illustrations she has created for a BBWN flyer and to decorate the new office. (A good reason to make a visit to the office!)

The next organizing meeting is set for Monday, December 11, 7-9 PM at the new office. **All women are welcome!**

Minutes submitted by Ellyn Ruthstrom

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

Bi-Lesbian Joint Rap Session — September 5, 1995

by Kate Griffin

Laughter? Yes. There was laughter and sharing and an honest effort to understand each other at the joint meeting of the 30+ Lesbian Women and the Bisexual Rap Groups at the Women's Center on Tuesday, September 5, 1995. The topic was "Biphobia."

While the lesbian group was interested in the definition of 'bisexuality,' there was a request for a definition of 'lesbian' and whether or not a lesbian who slept with a man could still call herself lesbian.

The living room, which is the largest room in the Center, was crowded with women on all available chairs and floor space for this, the second meeting of the two groups.

The format allowed each woman to introduce herself in some way and to state an important fact or ask a question. Many women chose to give a brief version of their own coming out. There was a good deal of similarity in the stories. Some talked of pain and fear and some had specific questions to ask.

One bisexual woman asked why she had been told that a lesbian may be afraid to have a bisexual female lover because the bisexual might leave her for a man. She wondered aloud what that said about the self-confidence of the lesbian but also what real difference it made. Her female lover left her for another woman and she assured the group the pain was just as great!

A transgendered woman spoke of the 'accepting' nature of her bisexual lovers who could appreciate her 'maleness' and 'femaleness'.

"It's getting harder and harder to identify the difference in physical appearance between the two groups," a lesbian remarked, "because some lesbian women are growing their hair longer and some bisexual women are cutting it shorter." A few audible gasps were heard but there never seemed to be enough time to explore those reactions.

The conclusion to the evening was that the event had been a wonderful exchange of ideas. Many women stated it was obvious that both groups were in the same 'camp' in the battle to open up the patriarchy to new ways of seeing people and living life and therefore we should be more united than split apart.

The next scheduled joint rap session for the lesbian and bi groups is December 12th. See the listing in the Calendar for more information.

Women's Events

The M.I.T. Women's Studies Program publishes a quarterly calendar, "Women's Studies Around Boston," which lists speakers, conferences, opportunities, and other events. To be included on the mailing list, write to:

M.I.T. Program in
Women's Studies
Room 14E-316
77 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

or you can sign up and discover the latest events by accessing their World Wide Web Internet page at <http://web.mit.edu/womens-studies/www/>.



Humor to Check Out:

We didn't get a chance to review this book, but it's bound to have something to please:

Out, Loud and Laughing: An Anthology of Gay and Lesbian Humor

edited by Charles Flowers
published by Anchor Books

If you get a hold of it, let us know what you think!



Michael Dane from page 1

of openly queer content into a forty minute set. Yet in four years of doing comedy as an out and proud bisexual to mostly "mainstream" audiences, he can recall only one or two shows in which he's encountered any problems. He prefers not to categorize these audiences as "straight" because, "if the statistics are right, there ought to be about forty to fifty of us out there" in any given audience.

So what's his secret to surviving and thriving in what seems like it would be a very hostile atmosphere? Well, first of all, he says, he doesn't "look" queer. And then he waits until half way through the show to spring the bi stuff on them, so "by then they already like me and have to *decide* not to."

His background in theater also helps. Part of his success stems from his ability to "connect with all the audience as a whole" through what he brands "guerrilla comedy." Dane rarely uses a microphone or a stage, regularly performing his act from *within the audience itself* ("it's more exciting"), addressing individuals directly, and strongly projecting his voice throughout five hundred seat rooms.

Michael Dane knows well that coming out as bi to hundreds of straight people on a nightly basis definitely has great potential to challenge stereotypes and prejudices against queer people, but it doesn't end there. He takes his hard hitting, confrontational style into the political arena as well, taking a swing at whichever side deserves it. ("I slam 'Bill' as much as the other guys. He's sure to be the first President to start a State of the Union address with 'What I meant was ...'")

Dane describes his comedy as having a definite "blue collar" edge to it. He especially takes issue with those comics that have a "smug" attitude toward political satire. He believes that anyone with "access to a newspaper or television" has the means to laugh at political comedy. Unfortunately, too many comedians who use political satire seem to think it requires "advanced intelligence" to understand and are in serious need of a reality check.

In addition to his comedy, Dane describes himself as a prolific writer and is currently working on his second one man show entitled "Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other," which should be finished sometime in the spring. The show will explore "opposites and middle ground." But, Dane explains, "my bisexuality leads me to believe that there are no black and white answers" to the juxtapositions and dichotomies that the show will address.

Dane's bisexuality gives him an excellent vantage point from which to see the hypocrisy in the gay community as well as in the straight world. He makes a living coming out to and challenging the assumptions of mostly straight audiences, has proven his commitment to the queer community by helping to start the gay and lesbian night at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles, and has given freely of his time and talent to benefit queer causes. Given this, he says, "it bothers me that some people don't see me as *gay enough*. I feel very committed to the community. It's already fragmented enough. We don't need more."

Although he says mainstream audiences are a "more interesting stew to stir-up," he has no qualms about using his honest, straightforward approach to challenge and win over gay audiences as well. Back when he still identified as straight, he was booked for a show in a lesbian bar as a result of the warm reception he'd gotten performing at Pride. For the first two thirds of the show, he got the cold shoulder, until he addressed the issue head on by asking "Isn't this exactly the kind of attitude that *you're* trying to oppose?" A few hands started clapping, and many more followed. And as he gets more experience, he says, he's getting better at confronting people about hypocrisy across the board.

Still, Michael Dane does not want to give the impression that he's on a crusade. "I can't change comedy," he says. "There needs to be a range."

True, but clearly a lot of us go out of our way to avoid most of that range. Toward the end of my interview with Michael Dane I mentioned that recently I had turned down free tickets to a local mainstream comedy club after one-too-many episodes of being offended by the content of his not very open minded colleagues. His suggestion was to let the club know why I had turned down the tickets and what I

Michael Dane continues on page 10



We are an organization of people actively interested or participating in alternative relationships and family lifestyles.

We have been holding discussion groups, social event, and conferences for more than sixteen years.

For more information and sample newsletter, write to:

Family Tree
Box 441275
Somerville, MA 02144

Camp Sister Spirit Still Needs Your Help

Camp Sister Spirit, Brenda and Wanda Henson's feminist and lesbian retreat in Ovet, Mississippi, is still facing legal troubles and harassment from a group called Mississippi for Family Values and from local "militia" groups. Donations are always welcome, as are visitors (rates vary from \$7-\$20 for accommodations; men as well as women are welcome). Upcoming events include a Winter Solstice Gathering on December 22, a Valentine's Dinner in February, 1996, and a Lesbian/Bi/Trans Studies course in January and February, 1996. You can contact them at Camp Sister Spirit, P.O. Box 12, Ovet, MS 39464 or call (601) 344-1411 for reservations.



Beijing And Beyond: Thinking About Bisexuality on a Large Scale

by Kirsten L. Isgro

The last five months for me as a bisexual activist have been invigorating! In July, as one of the BiNet's northeast regional representatives, I attended the annual BiNet USA meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the end of August I went to the United Nations' Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum on Women in China, where I met some amazing bi women. And the last weekend of October, the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights had their third annual conference, where the Vermont Bisexual Network had a strong presence. Needless to say, I have had lots to think about in terms of community organizing and what it means to be bisexual. The following are some of my thoughts and experiences:

The BiNet's sixth annual meeting was my first national bi event. Committees were formed, ideas were discussed, national coordinators were appointed (including Stephanie Berger, who just recently left Boston for San Francisco), and many new people were met. As someone from a rural state, it was often frustrating to try to figure out how I could go back to Vermont and really start organizing when so much discussion revolved around urban areas. Community organizing really does look different in the country, and it means thinking more carefully about transportation, relationships, geographic distance, and people's sense of isolation. What may work in Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis or Washington, D.C., will not work in areas where people have to drive across mountains for at least an hour for a social gathering.

This is not to say that bisexuals in cities don't

feel isolated. In fact, at the July meeting, time was set aside for separate men's and women's discussions about leadership within the bi movement. This was a very powerful part of the weekend for me, because it gave all of us an opportunity to hear and think about how women often work alone. As Stephanie said, it gave us the 'permission' to acknowledge the difficulties we face as women leaders.

One month later, I was in China as one of 35,000 other people attending the NGO Forum on Women. The goal of the NGO Forum was to "bring together women and men to challenge, create and transform global structures and processes at all levels through the empowerment and celebration of women." My two weeks in China were overwhelming and inspiring, and the stories I have are endless.

Although I did not go to the Fourth World Conference on Women as a bisexual first and foremost, I did have the fabulous experience of meeting other bi women from around the world. There were over 5,000 workshops on women, one of which was "Bisexual Women and Allies" that was held at the Lesbian tent. Over 30 women came to this workshop, from which a smaller group decided to meet for the remainder of the conference. Usually about six to eight women met at noon and talked about our personal experiences and feelings. Women were from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Thailand, Canada and the United States. There were many common themes that we discussed throughout the week. For many of us, we strive to be closer to people regardless of gender, whether such intimacy is sexual or not. Although we believe this is a strength, we often feel as if we are forced to "choose" to be sexually close with men or women, which may be confining or confusing to us.

The topic of sexual orientation was not included in the final draft of the United Nations' Platform for Action. However, women-loving-women from all over the world gathered in unprecedented numbers at the conference and demanded that women have the "freedom to determine one's own sexuality as an inalienable human right." A four-point document was created and available at the lesbian tent, demanding that "the concerns of lesbians and bisexual women be addressed in the formulation and implementation of all programs and policies which result

Beijing continues on next page

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Beijing *from previous page*

from the Platform for Action." I was pleased to see "bisexual" included in the draft, and I was excited that I was able to meet other bisexual women at the lesbian tent throughout the conference.

The most recent big event for me was the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VCLGR) conference in Montpelier. The Vermont BiNet had our first annual meeting, where we came up with an action plan for the next year. In addition to getting more people on our mailing list, we planned a potluck on December 10 and a more organized and visible bi presence at the June Pride Day parade.

There were visible bisexuals who led workshops throughout the conference. At one of the workshops, over 20 people got together to talk about the need for a separate bisexual sociopolitical identity, particularly as it relates to our personal lives. Throughout the day, the reception of Vermont BiNet was very welcoming, and I am personally very grateful to the VCLGR's inclusion of bisexual and transgender people at the annual conference. On a very local level, I am very excited to see an active bisexual community growing in Vermont.

Ultimately, I believe the most successful organizing, educating, and connecting with people is done on a one-to-one basis. This means that social change may come more slowly than we sometimes desire. However, making friends and liking and respecting the people we meet and work with is the heart of good organizing. And I have seen a lot of good networking in the past five months! The people who attended the BiNet USA meeting in July, the NGO Forum on Women this fall, and the Vermont BiNet workshops and meeting in October are those individuals who are working on a grassroots level to move toward world-wide change and understanding.

For more information about BiNet USA or Vermont BiNet, please contact Kirsten at (802) 658-9554.

The Vermont Bisexual Network will have a potluck in Montpelier on Sunday, December 10. Call Terri for more information at (802) 223-3475.

BiNet USA
P.O. Box 7327
Langley Park, MD 20787-0327

Vermont Bisexual Network
P.O. Box 8124
Burlington, VT 05402-8124

The women-loving-women who attended the NGO Forum issued the following:

We demand action!

Women-loving-women from all over the world, gathered together in unprecedented numbers at the NGO Forum on Women 1995, call on the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women to:

Recognize the freedom to determine one's sexuality as an inalienable human right and a necessary precondition for equality, development and peace.

Recognize and integrate the needs and concerns of women of all sexual orientations throughout the Platform for Action.

Direct governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations to address the concerns of lesbians and bisexual women in the formulation and implementation of all programs and policies which result from the Platform for Action.

Make this a Conference of Commitments, with a concrete plan of action to guarantee for all women the full exercise of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

We represent many countries, including:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand/Australia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Phillipines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Suriname, Thailand, United States/Aztlan, Uruguay, Yugoslavia

If homosexuality is a disease, let's all call in queer to work.

"Hello, can't work today, still queer."

—Comic Robin
Tyler



Beth Israel Hospital



NINA CARROLL, M.D.
Gynecology

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Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

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Emergency Page
(617) 730-3188

ALL Bi, MYSELF in "Just Plain Stuffed!"



Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Bisexuality and More:

A Review of Marjorie Garber's Vice Versa

by [REDACTED]

A professor at Harvard University, Marjorie Garber takes a fascinating and comprehensive look at bisexuality throughout the ages. It might be argued that she throws in everything but the kitchen sink in an effort to make bisexuality all-inclusive, all-pervasive, and, well, something for everyone. The colorful cover and catchy title attempt to give us the impression that this is a book for the masses. However, it is written with such intellectual incisiveness and impressive scholarship that the average person may find her/himself quickly bogged down in detail.

This is not to say that Garber is without humor. She has a wonderful wit and is particularly fond of making plays on words to illustrate her theme. It is just another of her ways of saying there are alternate ways of looking at the world, other realities and infinite diversity. And this attitude, expressed in varied ways, is what makes this book a real gem for those with a burning interest in the subject of bisexuality.

A quick glance at the table of contents suggests the breadth of this study: culture, politics, history, science, psychoanalysis, psycho mythology, social institutions and erotics are a few of the topics that Garber places under her microscope, all the better to dissect and analyze. She shows us that, far from being unusual or a modern innovation, bisexuality has been an integral part of the human psyche since the beginning of time.

Garber's main premise is that sexuality is a fluid continuum; that individuals have, and always will, occupy intermediate points along that line; and that those points may vary with the passage of time and changes in circumstance. No need to force ourselves into pigeonholes or create labels;

VICE VERSA continues on page 11

Renrikan continued from page 5

ties. We study two traditional Japanese arts, one considered "soft" and circular, the other "hard", linear, and rooted, in order to balance their complementary wisdoms. We strive both for self-development and self-defense. Renrikan embraces diverse students and is explicitly gay- and bi-welcoming. (Sensei Jim Poli is gay.) We are a community of friends as well as "opponents", women and men learning together with discipline and humor.

Renrikan is a small school, seeking to expand while maintaining a spirit of community. If you would like to observe a class or would like more information, please call Sensei ("teacher") Jim Poli at (617) 236-7888. Sensei Poli has earned a fourth degree black belt in Aiki and a third degree black belt in Karate. He has practiced and taught martial arts since 1979, and is a talented and personable teacher. Classes are held at the Arlington Street Church in Boston on Tues. and Thurs. from 7-9 p.m. and Sat. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Fees are \$60 per month.



The Married Bisexual Women's Support Group is currently open to new members.

The group meets monthly at the office and is open to women who are partnered with or in a committed relationship with a man. For information call Karyn at (617) 244-0360.

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Freedom To Marry Coalition Forming in New England

by Linda Blair

On May 5, 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court held in the case of *Baehr vs. Lewin* that the refusal to issue marriage licenses to same-gender couples is gender discrimination in violation of the state constitutional guarantee of equal protection. The Court sent the case back to the lower court to give the state a chance to defend the policy, which will now attempt to show "compelling" reasons why only different-gender couples should be allowed to marry. This type of legal condition is always difficult to show and there is a great deal of optimism in the legal and activist communities that the court will rule to legalize same gender marriage in Hawaii.

Some of the legal and economic benefits of marriage include: status as next-of-kin for hospital visits and medical decisions; joint parenting, adoption, foster care, custody and child visitation; responsibility for child support; joint insurance policies for home, auto and health; automatic inheritance in the absence of a will; bereavement leave when a partner or child dies; decisionmaking power with respect to the burial or cremation of a deceased partner; and immigration and residency for partners from other countries. Most of these benefits cannot be arranged for privately.

A national Freedom to Marry Coalition has recently formed to coordinate a political and educational organizing campaign around the legalization of same-gender marriage.

As a founding member of the national coalition, the Boston based organization Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is working with other groups to build diverse and inclusive state-level coalitions throughout New England. As an initial step, GLAD is asking organizations to sign on a resolution which states: Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice, *Resolved* the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage.

To obtain a copy of the resolution and for more information on how your local organization can get involved in your state, contact GLAD at P.O. Box 218, Boston, MA 02112, (617) 426-1350 (tel.), (617) 426-3594 (fax).



Dykes, from page 5

Bechdel's characters have evolved with the times, especially Clarice and Toni's domestic life and the political ambitions of Harriet's girlfriend, Ellen. Bechdel also introduces other elements of the ever-changing world of queer culture. The last collection, *Spawn of Dykes to Watch Out For*, included several strips involving Naomi, one of Lois' ex-lovers who began dating a man and started a bisexual support group. The characters' reactions ranged from tolerant to hostile, but the inclusion of Naomi as a minor character is definitely a bi-positive step. In this collection, Mo organizes a lesbian reading series at Madwimmin Books and has to decide if Jillian, a transsexual lesbian, qualifies. As usual, it is free-spirited Lois who informs Mo that "Love is a many-gendered thing". In a statement that bis will definitely welcome, Lois declares: "In fact, the point is that we're all just ourselves, and not categories. Instead of two rigid genders, there's an infinite sexual continuum. Cool, huh?" Mo decides to include Jillian in the reading series, and gets varied reactions from audience members.

As she does in most of her collections, *Unnatural Dykes* includes an original comic "novella" at the end. In "Sentimental Education," Bechdel describes how the central characters met each other in college and during a women's demonstration at the Pentagon in the early 1980's, adding background to the characters that fleshes them out and throwing in a few surprises like details about Mo and Clarice's relationship and Lois' anti-porn period.

I highly recommend the *Dykes to Watch Out For* series. Bechdel creates an idealized but richly possible community network of women with characters who are diverse, unique and likable. They are not, of course, for the close-minded or the impossibly politically correct - everything from President Clinton to self-help psychobabble is treated with irreverent wit. Each book contains a brief cast of characters at the beginning, so prior familiarity with the strip is not necessary.

Resources For LesbianGay Christians

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) offers many resources for gay, lesbian and bisexual Christians including inclusively worded bibles, pamphlets and books on queer issues both in religion and in society.

For a catalog, contact them at:

UFMCC Resource Center
5300 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Suite 304

Los Angeles, CA 90029

phone: 213-464-5100

fax 213-464-2123

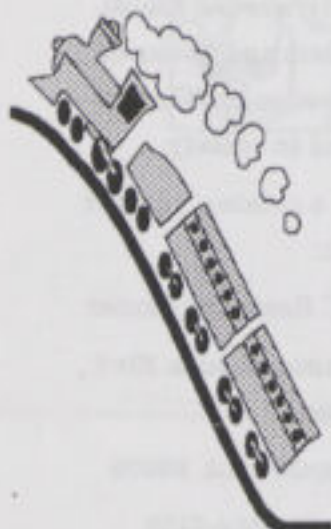
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617.497.6581

Easy — a term used to describe a woman who has the sexual morals of a man

—From the "Dating Dictionary" on the World Wide Web



The Twelve Nights of Winter

A Grand Opening! Parody of the Beloved Song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"

by Kim Airs

On the first night of winter, my true love gave to me....

A Rabbit Pearl in a PAIR tree

On the second night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Two Ben Wa Balls

On the third night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Three Dragon Dildos

On the fourth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Four Black Jack Condoms

On the fifth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Five silver rings

On the sixth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Six stick-on Dildos

On the seventh night of winter, my true love gave to me....

A Wahl 7-way plug-in

On the eighth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

One Eight-inch Stiffie

On the ninth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

A Black Cat O'Nine Tails

On the tenth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Ten latexed fingers

On the eleventh night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Eleven bouncing pussies

On the twelfth night of winter, my true love gave to me....

Twelve toys a'twirlin'

Kim Airs is the proprietress of Grand Opening!, a women's sex toy and sexuality store in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Michael Dane from page 4

would like to see instead. "It doesn't need to be confrontational. Call and ask: 'Do you have any gay, lesbian or bisexual comics tonight? Do you have any women comics?' Comedy clubs are in business to make money and they'll respond if they get enough of this type of feedback."

Although he clearly has a bias toward hard-hitting, in your face political and social satire, Dane says he wants the medicine to go down easy. "I'm hired to get laughs. And people don't just expect to be entertained for their ten dollars these days, they demand it."

And who does Michael Dane turn to when he wants to be entertained? Among some of the up-and-coming comedians he suggests checking out are Barry Steiger, an openly gay comic and former Baptist preacher; Suzanne Westenhoefer, a very funny lesbian comic who just recorded an HBO special you can watch for; and Steve Moore, who does stand up comedy dealing with his positive HIV status ("When I first told my Southern parents that I was HIV+ they said 'Oh, we didn't know you were Haitian,' and 'You really should laugh more because Silence = Death'").

"Humor can be very healing," Dane muses. "It allows us all to be scared together. There's something bonding in laughing."

Michael Dane performs frequently at Dick Doherty's Comedy Clubs in cities and towns around Boston and Nick's Comedy Stop in Boston.

ALL Bi, MYSELF in "Mattie meets a cute dish"



Vice Versa from page 8

the nature of life is change, and mental and emotional health is enhanced by accepting that fact.

Well documented in *Vice Versa* is the fact that some past eras have shown considerable tolerance towards freedom of expression in the area of sexuality. Since occasional same-sex adventures were not seen as negating a basically heterosexual lifestyle, they were not the subject of the intense scrutiny which today results in the application of labels and, ultimately, the formation of a political body with an agenda. Garber discusses the role of the bisexual as social and political pariah to gays and straights alike. The attitude of freedom and fluidity intrinsic to bisexuality is extremely threatening to anyone clinging to a rigid sexual identity as partial definer of their true nature.

Garber finds bisexuality in unexpected places. She devotes considerable attention to Freud and his colleague Wilhelm Fleiss, both of whom were seminal thinkers in the development of the concept of bisexuality. The two also shared a relationship which, Garber implies, enabled them in some ways to understand the fluidity of the sexual continuum on a more personal level. The great sexologist Havelock Ellis apparently also experienced the vicissitudes of sexuality within the context of his marriage, his wife Edith continuing to have relationships with women throughout the course of their union.

Particularly fascinating is Garber's detailed descriptions of many historical figures, as well as the bohemian life styles of artists, writers, and performers in the 20th century who come alive for us with all the passion and vitality with which they lived their lives. Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf, Frida Kahlo and Georgia O'Keefe are only a few of the dynamic figures we meet in this book. *Vice Versa's* bibliography is a gold mine of tantalizing sources waiting to be explored.

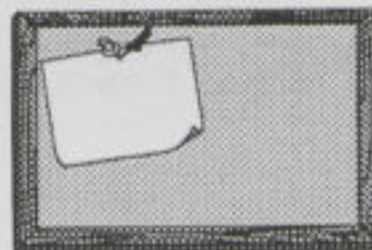
Homosexuals may resent Garber's inclusion under the umbrella of bisexuality of individuals heretofore claimed by the gay and lesbian community as their own. This issue brings to the forefront the internalized homophobia and divisiveness which strikes to the heart of efforts toward social and political acceptance. Each individual's position along the continuum of sexuality must be interpreted not only by how that individual sees her/himself, but by how others see her/him and the value judgments incurred thereby.

Fascinating and thought-provoking are understatement when it comes to describing this monumental work. It is a book to go back to again and again, and a jumping off point for further exploration.

Humor from page 1

And there's Gloria Steinham's remark during the recent visit of the Pope to the U.S.: "May he live long enough to honor the skirt that he wears!"

And, finally, Roseanne Arnold made me understand why I cannot read maps: "Men can read maps better than women because only the male mind could conceive of one inch equaling a hundred miles."



CALENDAR continued from page 12

January 30 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Read BiWomen hot off the press, catch up with old friends, meet new ones and help get out the newsletter. 7-9 pm at the Bi Office.

January 30 & 31 ♦ Tuesday & Wednesday

Annie Sprinkle at the Coolidge Corner Theater. 8:00-10:00 pm. Post-porn modernist, sex educator, former porn star, Annie will be presenting a new and different show than her summer appearance in Boston with more video clips, anecdotes and other great stuff. Tickets are \$15 and are available at Grand Opening! (617) 731-2626 and at the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. Wheel chair accessible.

January 31 ♦ Wednesday

Annie Sprinkle will be at Grand Opening! from 11 am-1 pm to sign your copy of her Post Porn Modernist book and playing cards, "Sluts and Goddesses" video, or anything else you'd like! 318 Harvard St., Suite 32, Arcade Building, Coolidge Corner, Brookline.

April 4 - 7 ♦ Thursday - Sunday

8th Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival. Camp Sister Spirit, Ovett, Mississippi. Brenda and Wanda Henson, Co-Producers. Workshops, night stage, craftwomyn show, raffle, silent auction, good southern food and hospitality. Info: write to P.O. Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464.

NEW GROUP!!

Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Vegetarian Social Group is forming.

We'll be meeting on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month for outings and potlucks. Call 625-6918 for information.

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25.

Send a business-card sized ad or personal ad (50 words or less) and a check (to BBWN) to:

BiWomen, c/o BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Such a deal!

617-393-9579
1310 Broadway, Suite 201
Somerville, MA 02144

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Spiritual Exploration and Integration
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Blending Holistic
&
Traditional Approaches

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, now in its new home at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. Our new phone # is (617) 424-9595. If you haven't yet been to an event or meeting in our cool new space, come by and check it out!

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

L/G/B Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals.

Concert band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

Early December

"When Night Is Falling," a film with a bi theme that reportedly "gives rise to a new adult eroticism for the 90's," will be showing at the Coolidge Corner Theater. Let's find a time to go see it together. Call Julie at (617) 731-2307 during the first week in December about the time and date.

December 3 ♦ Sunday

BiSpace. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9 pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

December 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center.

December 7 ♦ Thursday

GLBT Studies Lecture Series presents Bates College Professor of Rhetoric Charles Nero speaking on the topic "Remembering Langston: Homophobic Textuality and Arnold Rampersad's *The Life of Langston Hughes*". Noon. Univ. of Mass. at Amherst Campus Center. Info: (413) 545-4824.

December 10 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Join your friends and dance the night away! Tea dance is from 5-10 pm. 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge.

December 11 ♦ Monday

BBWN Planning Meeting. 7-9 pm. at the Bi Office. Bring your ideas, your energy and your enthusiasm to make BBWN a vibrant organization that's making things happen! All women welcome.

December 12 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Women/Lesbian joint rap group. Begins either at 7:00 pm or 7:30 pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Square), Cambridge. Call (617) 354-8807 for topic and meeting time.

Biversity Double Feature. Oh sure, been there done that. But see 'em together for the full effect. 7:30 - To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar; 9:45 - The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. At the Brattle Theater, Cambridge, near the Harvard Square T stop on the Red Line.

December 14 ♦ Thursday

BBWN shopping trip to Grand Opening! 7:30-9pm. Come check out your favorite "sexuality boutique for women and their friends" to find the perfect holiday gift for that special someone on your holiday shopping list (or for yourself!). Grand Opening! is at 318 Harvard St., Suite 32, Arcade Building, Coolidge Corner, Brookline.

December 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11 am at Johnny D's. Across from the Davis Square T stop on the Red Line in Somerville. Possible run to see the 2 pm matinee of "Jeffrey" at the Brattle Theater in Harvard Square.

December 17 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. 12:30 pm at Margie's near Brookline Village in Brookline. A massage workshop will follow the brunch. Bring an exercise mat or towel. Call Rosalie at 566-6543 for directions.

December 19 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See December 6.

December 31 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:30 pm at the Galaxy Grille, 156 Cambridge St., Boston, near the Government Center T stop on the Green Line. For all interested, we can wander about First Night activities afterwards.

January 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See December 6.

January 5 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. Submissions on all subjects welcome. Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

January 7 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. See December 6.

January 10 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

January 14 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Go wild, have fun, dance on the tables! (but don't tell the management there we suggested it). Tea dance is from 5-10 pm., 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge.

January 16 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See December 6.

January 20 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. 12:30 pm at Ellyn's near Davis Square in Somerville. Call her at (617) 629-2727 for directions and to see if there will be any plan or program following the brunch.

Biversity Brunch, 11 am at Thornton's at 100 Peterborough St. in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

January 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:30 pm at the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth St., Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

CALENDAR continues on page 11